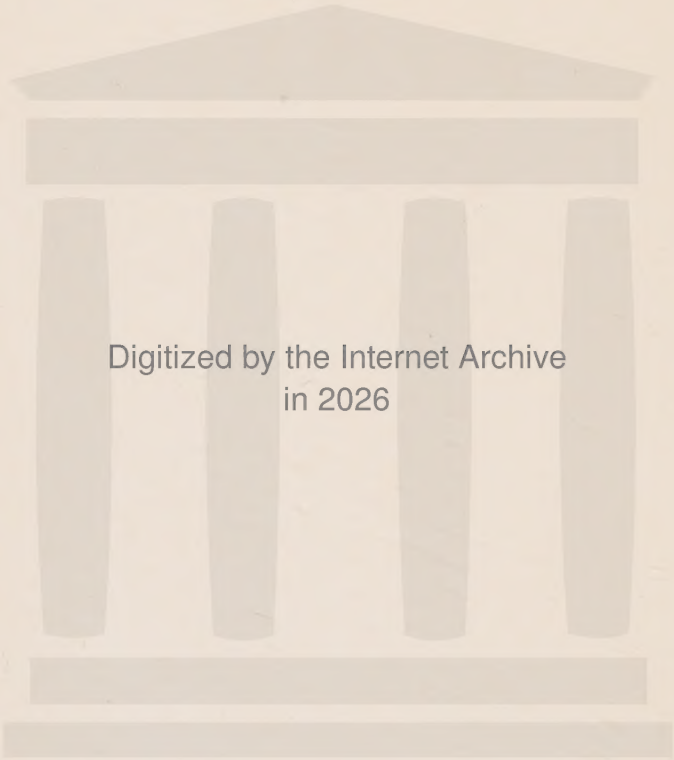
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
3 1822 00175 5974

OLD SEAPORT TOWNS OF THE SOUTH

MILDRED CRAM

DRAWINGS BY
ALLAN G. CRAM

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
3 1822 00175 5974
WITHDRAWN
FROM UCSD
THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA
Annex
F
215
.C88
1917
Central University Library
University of California, San Diego
Please Note: This item is subject to recall.
Date Due
NOV 01 1994
NOV 11 1994
CI 39 (7/93)
UCSD Lib.


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/oldseaporttownso0000mild

OLD SEAPORT TOWNS OF THE SOUTH

A MIRAGE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IN FLORIDA

Old Seaport Towns of the South

By

Mildred Cram

Drawings by

Allan G. Cram

New York
Dodd, Mead & Company
1917

Copyright, 1917,
By Dodd, Mead and Company, Inc.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Introducing—Ourselves, and the Scope of the Work	1
II.	Lady Baltimore in a Mackintosh, Something about Annapolis and a Great Deal about Rain	12
III.	Which Contains a Trolley Trip and a Laundry Grievance	43
IV.	On to Wilmington, a Wreck, and a Little Dissertation on Pullman Cars	72
V.	Palms and Spanish Moss at Last, and We Make Our Bow to Aristocratic Madame Charleston	99
VI.	A Confession of Laziness in Savannah and a Step Further South to "Jax"	132
VII.	An Afternoon in Old St. Augustine and a Chronicle of Tire Trouble	158
VIII.	Tampa, Spaniards and the Greek Sponge Fleet at Tampa	193
IX.	'Way Down in Pensacola, Seaplanes, Submarines, and Lunch with an Admiral, with a Storm as an Anticlimax	223

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
X.	A Day in Mobile and On to New Orleans Where We Meet a Very Capable Young Woman	257
XI.	Creoles, Pralines and a Little History	289
XII.	Galveston, the Optimist	318
XIII.	Key West at Dawn	332
XIV.	Wind, Waves and Home Again	353

ILLUSTRATIONS

A Mirage of the Mediterranean in Florida *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

I Held an Umbrella Over Allan While He Sketched the Big Transport "Grekland" . 26

The One- and Two-storied Houses Reminded Us of Clovelly 36

A Cluster of Small Sailing Boats and Dories . 40

The Ferry Slip at Norfolk 50

The Navy Yard Gate, Portsmouth 56

It Was Still Very Early When the Ferry Drew Away from Norfolk 74

Long Hours of Lazy Contemplation . . . 100

Charleston Is Caught Into a Dream of the Romantic Past 110

The Beautiful South Portal of St. Philip's Church 118

The Severity of the Pillared Portico is Relieved by Delicate Wrought Iron Railings . . . 128

Great Ships Come Eighteen Miles from the Sea to Savannah's Front Door Step 140

A Magnificent Avenue of Live Oaks . . . 148

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PACING PAGE
The Spaniards Called Their Fort the Castle San Marco	166
We Could Chat Comfortably with the Captain without Stirring from Our Garden Bench	198
The Hotel and Its Gardens were Alluring	210
The Greeks Had Said Their Prayers and Were at Work Again	220
A Great Floating Hangar, Truly Magnificent in Proportion	240
Ships from the Mexican Gulf and the Caribbean	266
You Remember Jim Bludso, Don't You? I'll Show You His World	284
This is the Real New Orleans!	292
Stuccoed Brick Walls, Arcades and Cool Inner Courts	300
A Grain Elevator, as Grim and Sombre as a Mediæval Fortress	326
Dolphins Cavorted at Sunset, Turning Beautiful Somersaults	336
The Boisterous Wind Rattled the Cocoa Palms	348

OLD SEAPORT TOWNS OF THE SOUTH

OLD SEAPORT TOWNS OF THE SOUTH

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING—OURSELVES, AND THE SCOPE OF THE WORK

WHILE our taxi hung a moment on the edge of Broadway we peered through the rain-spangled windows and sighed, like true provincial New Yorkers, because we were leaving our city. Broadway cut north and south like a rainbow. Electric signs dripped in liquid sheets or burst into fiery spray. High on the housetops huge figures trod the darkness for an instant and disappeared. Lights blinked, glittered, exploded in multi-coloured pinwheels, ran up and down and dizzily around, shot into the sky, fell in a shower of prismatic sparks. . . . We sighed, for we were leaving New York, and it still had its octopus arms around us.

Our taxi pranced a little like an impatient

carriage horse, the traffic policeman signalled and the city streamed past again. It was like being in a fast undersea boat rushing along the bottom of a luminous ocean. The driver manœuvred a wide curve at top speed and brought us up to the Pennsylvania Station with a flourish just where a red-capped porter angled on the edge of the curb for passengers with suitcases.

But it wasn't until we were caught in the pie-shaped wedge of travellers at the ticket gate that we realised how irrevocable our going away was. And then we had a chilling sensation of exile, as if we were leaving all the things we liked best—friends, fun, work, New York—and were not going to find anything to take their place. That is the worst of being a New Yorker; like a breathless joy-rider in a scenic railway car, you shut your eyes and shriek, "Oh, isn't it *fun!* There's nothing like it in the *world!*" Forgetting that beyond the wall of glittering towers, across the moat of rivers, there are cities and people, great activities and amazing beauty. Not only the ashes of cities and people, but the living heart of them, the "rest of America."

Waiting for the six o'clock train to Baltimore, we felt a little unsteady, as if the violent

motion of our familiar world had ceased. We felt, to tell the truth, like sailors ashore.

We were going to our native South which we left before memory began, and which had come to mean, through parental reminiscences, a place of sun, chivalry, romance and Uncle Remus. Somewhere in our obscure consciousness, not altogether wiped out by a New England childhood, a European youth, and a New York maturity, we bear the impress of a Southern ancestry—Catholics who came to America with Lord Baltimore, and thanks to a king and queen who were recklessly generous with Maryland, settled themselves in what is now a whole county. Besides bequeathing to us a love of dark churches and incense, a taste for hot-breads and an incurably romantic turn of mind, they left nothing to posterity but their freed slaves who proudly bore and still flaunt the family name. We are always running across dusky "relatives," even as far north as New York.

"Lo'd, chile," a cook of ours once said to me, "was yo' maw's name the same as mine? Why, gracious goodness, Miss Mildred, we-all's the same *family!*"

It was almost more than I could bear, for she was as black as the ace of spades, as black as a bottle of ink, as black as soot. But she

fortunately explained, as she stirred the corn-bread batter, "My great gran'paw was yo' gran'-paw's body servant." And you can imagine how gratifying it was to hear that my great grandpa was such a howling dude! Afterwards I used the bit of information to overawe the cook, just as I can twist any Irish maid around my finger by informing her with an exalted and fanatic gleam in my eyes that I was blessed by Pius X and kissed the hand of Pope Benedict when he was a Cardinal. That and a piece of lucky coral from Naples (for use on Italians) work wonders in settling domestic problems, and domestics. While I thought about my Southern ancestors and wondered whether they would help me to love the South, the ticket gate opened and we squeezed through to our train. "New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore." As Hewlett would say, "God, what a traverse!"

The way to Baltimore lies across flat country. After the train plunges under the river, where certain sensitive travellers stop up their ears as if they were in the Simplon, it goes hand in hand with suburban "locals" for miles before it can make up its mind to start off alone to Philadelphia. From your Pullman, where you lounge with the hatless, permanent languor which means "I am an adventurer; I am going

far," you can look into the brilliantly lighted, crowded suburban trains and pity the rows of tired business men screened by pink evening papers. But there is nothing spectacular about the scenery. Even when we pressed our noses against the rain-spattered windows and stared out, we could see nothing but long strings of electric lights linking town to town. It was more fun to lean back in our chairs and stare at the people in the car. Most of them were school children returning to school after the Christmas holidays, the girls full of funny little affectations, the boys steeped in a perfectly transparent and artificial melancholy. They were having such a good time, each with his soul-satisfying egoism! Watching them, we were envious a little, and then we began to see how funny they were and didn't want their youth but simply blessed them for it. And our thoughts turned to the South again.

"I am going there with my mind as blank as a wax-coated phonograph record," I thought, "ready to receive the myriad impressions that will carve little hair-lines all over my receptive brain, recording colours and voices, the smell of the sea, the drift of clouds and the sun on a garden wall. Perhaps, when they put me between the covers of a book, I shall sing! After

all," I went on, shutting my eyes, "an Italian wrote the best book of American travel I have ever read. He saw us not only as others see us, but as we are. That was because he didn't understand us at all. Out of the unfamiliar, like a magician drawing yards of ribbon from the crown of a silk hat, he evoked the picturesque. A negro was as strange and colourful to him as an East Indian, and a Cherokee burial mound was as suggestive as an Etruscan tomb. If he didn't like something about us, he trod gaily on our toes. If he thought Brownsville, Idaho, an ugly, dirty, sun-baked wilderness, he said so because by no possible chance did his mother's third cousin live there. On one page he treated us with devastating ridicule and on the next he took us to his heart for something we are ashamed of. . . . Out of the whole here emerged a composite American, energetic, inventive and provincial, with a voice like a rasp and a sentimental interior, taciturn about everything except business, turning his back on sunsets and dawns to read a newspaper, the builder of a new world, of all the men on earth the only one who is engaged in creating a civilisation. After all, an epic hero in ill-fitting clothes, Ulysses in peg-tops and stub-toed boots."

I opened my eyes again and rubbed the blurred windows to look out. The train was rushing across a dark plain. All I could see was a smudge of black smoke full of rocketing sparks; and my mind turned to our trip again. . . . We were going to travel fast, by train and by boat, all the way down the South Atlantic Coast, around the Gulf of Mexico to Galveston. We were going to see the myriad activities of nineteen seaports. I wondered whether it would be possible to follow the advice of the up-to-date slogan, "Keep your eye on the South!" It was, after all, a fairly large slice of the world to focus on. There is the old South and the new, as different as night and day. One is a place of gardens and sunshine, golden jessamine and honeysuckle, and the melancholy beauty of dignified decay. The other is a place of factories and harbours, active, vigorous and purposeful. "Keep your eye on the South!" I would try.

"The spectacle of force," I thought, "is within our optic capabilities, but a true conception of force comes through a more complicated sensible faculty. The might of machinery, the movement of railways and ships, digging down in the earth and building up in the sky are all manifestations of material force—majestic, su-

perb, visible manifestations of that hidden inner force which is the imperishable urge of the living spirit to creation. The force of a single spirit is as great as the force of the whole universe. Behind the birth and growth of a city, the building of a factory or a railway, the dredging of a harbour, there are countless human dreams. What a pity that the immeasurable power in material creation cannot be turned partially into artistic creation! If one-third of the energy which goes into modern commercial achievement could be applied to the plastic, George Moore would have no need to bewail the death of art. But beauty is, after all, a matter of individual conception. The modern artist is surrounded by factories, an intricate tangle of railroad tracks, dry docks, furnaces, kilns, gashes in the face of the earth, warehouses, steel shops, iron tubes, steam, straining truck horses, sweating labourers, grain elevators and whalebacks, bridges, trestles, dredges, the smooth-thrusting piston and rod, white-hot furnaces, murky tunnels, crowds dressed all alike in sombre clothes, a vast and immeasurable concentration of millions of people upon material things.

"Out of this, life as it is, he must weave an imaginative fabric of his own. This is the

source of his inspiration, the most suggestive, the most majestic, the surest source of inspiration for art since art began. Not the soft hills and the pale skies of Greece, of course; not the emotional, ardent life of the Renaissance at Florence; not the poetry of old England or the tenderness of old France, but steel and fire and swarming labourers! Who could watch the godlike activity of a ship's engine room, the graceful reachings and retreats, the smooth precision, the leashed virility of the thrusting steel rods, without being sure that here is art?"

This thought took me back to studios in New York where men I know are covering canvases with squares, patches and whirligigs in imitation, they say, of contemporary life. They call themselves modernists and say that life to-day has no form. Chaotic colour, a shattering of sounds—sensation! And they splash rainbows in interpretation, achieving nothing but a contortion of past art, rehashing El Greco, the Egyptians, the Etruscans and the Byzantine. They put their hands over their eyes and groan when you speak of form.

"The world," they say, "is chaotic—we paint what we see." Marinetti, the arch-priest (or is he arch-fiend?) of modernism, taught them to do that. And yet, to focus our mind myopic-

ally, the whole of America is absorbed in one vast struggle for power and still more power, bigness and still more bigness, riches and still more riches, with a unity of purpose which makes the building of the Pyramids look like child's play, and the trade of Phœnicia a miniature game of chess with ships as pawns. If the voyage of Ulysses was epic, if Hannibal's crossing of the Alps was heroic, if the activity of Venice was inspiring, if mediæval Italy was poetic, then America, to-day, is all of these. When Ghirlandaio painted his Florentine street scenes across the chapel wall of Santa Maria Novella, he was painting a homely commonplace. There is no reason why Brangwyn's nude workmen should not some day take on the quality of aloofness, the allurement of the unfamiliar which make *Giovanna* and *Tito* creatures of poetic fancy.

I asked Allan, who was flattening his lovely nose against the window, if he didn't agree with me that longshoremen are as picturesque as mediæval saints.

"I'm not saying they aren't," he answered, looking bewildered. He had been thinking about aeroplanes, and saints took him a little by surprise.

"That makes me think of a story," I said. "There were two darkies who met on the road. One of them said to the other, 'I heah you-all is married, Sam.'

" 'Well,' said Sam, scratching his head, 'I ain't sayin' I *ain't.*'

"The first darkey lost his temper. 'I ain't askin' you is you ain't,' he yelled. 'I'se askin' you ain't you *is!*' "

"There is a better one than that," Allan said. "A darkey was on trial for shooting at another darkey.

" 'Amos,' said the judge who was trying the case, 'what provocation did Moses give you for attempting to kill him?'

" 'Jedge,' said Amos, 'what would you-all do if a man done called you a nappy-headed, black houn' and a damn fool?'

" 'Well, Amos,' said the judge, 'no one ever called me such things. I'm not a hound, nor am I a nappy-headed damn fool.'

" 'Well, Jedge,' cried Amos desperately, 'what would you do if you was called jest whichever kind of a damn fool you *is!*' "

I was still wondering when the train drew into Baltimore and another angling red-cap landed us neatly and led us, like a magnet luring pins, to a taxi-cab.

CHAPTER II

LADY BALTIMORE IN A MACKINTOSH, SOMETHING ABOUT ANNAPOLIS AND A GREAT DEAL ABOUT RAIN

AM afraid that this chapter will be mostly about rain. It was raining when the Baltimore taxi, a very lively taxi indeed, skidded through miles of lovely residential streets to the Hotel Rennert. It was still raining when I looked out of my window for the last time before going to bed. And I could see nothing of Baltimore except a tall, thin office building illuminated, like a comic opera star, by a cluster of searchlights. I crawled into an enormously wide bed and sank down on the fat pillows with a groan of pleasure. I was tired; I hadn't believed that leaving New York *could* tire me so. I had rather believed that going away just as things got tremendously interesting might act as a rest-cure. Absurd provincial! The rest of the world, so far, had been just as exciting as my own fifty square blocks of Gotham. The taxi had nosed

through traffic in Baltimore with the sickening speed we thought we had left behind when we dismissed our "black and white" at the Pennsylvania Station. The lobby of the Rennert had been as crowded as a New York lobby; page boys wandered up and down singing "*Mees*-ter Brown, *Mees*-ter Krinsky, *Mees*-ter Trum" in nasal voices. Negroes with nasal voices where I had expected to hear Uncle Remus cadences! Other page boys spun the revolving doors and made futile grabs for the valises of departing and arriving travelling salesmen. New York again! "Bother," I thought, "this isn't the South." But the elevator was lazy and the little cakes of soap in the bathroom were stamped with the sure enough name, Baltimore—Baltimore!

It was still raining in staccato patterings when I went to sleep. And I was lulled further by a chorus of men's voices, coming through a radiator from some dining-room or banquet hall downstairs, singing "Good night, ladies" in close harmony. It must have been a boys' "frat" party (the boys aged fifty-three or thereabouts), for no one sings "Good night, ladies" in this day and generation. "Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along," they sang, as I sank down into the fat pillows and closed my

eyes, "Merrily we roll along, o-o-o-ver the dark blue seas. . . ."

It was still raining when I woke. The spotlight had been turned off and the giddy office building thrust its head into scudding black clouds. We had brought all sorts of things to wear in warm weather—Palm Beach suits (to be worn under overcoats!), straw hats and cool silks. I had pictured myself, before starting, in what the railroad posters call "sunny climes," cavorting on white beaches, being wheeled about n bicycle chairs under palms and moss-draped oaks; I had even contemplated, further south, a helmet and white linen sport things. But one by one, all the way to Key West, I shipped my trunks full of summer finery back to New York. Packages of winter flannels, furs, mufflers and felt hats, packed in a frantic hurry by my puzzled family, caught up with me at Norfolk, Savannah, Pensacola and New Orleans. It was an extraordinary winter, they say. But then it always is extraordinary—disagreeably so, of course—when I travel. If I should go to Greenland, the mercury would climb out of the top of the thermometer. Local colour skips before me like an elusive flea, so that when I write travel articles I always have to put myself down as a liar or else take all my facts

from the penny guide books and trust to luck. The South may be warm, and it may possibly be sunny, but if I let either word creep into this book you will know that I was writing through the top of my hat and holding the ink-well up my sleeve. It rained in Baltimore; I opened my eyes to a sodden and soaked Baltimore, I left a sodden and soaked Baltimore a week later. Allan and I introduced ourselves to the Monument City by starting out in a frigid drizzle of fine rain to buy rubbers. The boy in charge of the revolving doors, overjoyed to have something conversational to do, explained that we could find a shoe store "one block to the right and then down," where he believed we could buy a right good pair of gums. Then he tucked us into the revolving door and sent us spinning out into Baltimore.

But we lost ourselves at the corner and had to ask directions of a policeman who was standing under an umbrella and bawling at traffic from behind a mud-guard, as secure from the splashings of passing motors as a lady in a limousine.

"One block to the left and then on," said he, in a tone so languid that I fancy they spoil their policemen in Baltimore.

After all, it doesn't matter how you introduce

yourself to a city. You may make elaborate preparations to have the meeting propitious, and then find that you have shaken hands formally and have forgotten to look into the city's eyes. You may blindfold yourself and have yourself taken to the top of the tallest building, so that when the bandage is removed you will be struck dumb with amazement and surprise. Or you may walk around the corner on a rainy day and run bang into the city wearing her prettiest gown and smiling her most cordial smile. And she may, just because you look bedraggled and forlorn, ask you to tea. For cities are like people—they are at their best when you expect the least of them.

Baltimore was beautiful in the rain, and buying overshoes was as good as any other way to introduce ourselves to her. With my muddy shoes on the knees of a shoe clerk in the first shop we came to, I learned how to find my way about the city. The shoe clerk was a sort of audible civic map with a bump of locality so highly developed that, like a homing pigeon, he could have been blindfolded in Baltimore, led to Hong Kong and started back again with nothing but a pocket compass and a pen-knife. He explained Baltimore while he fitted enormous rubbers on my not so enormous shoes.

Charles Street runs north and south, Baltimore Street runs east and west, and from them the other streets are numbered east and west, north and south, on a very orderly plan that holds good everywhere except in the centre of the city, where there is a hopeless confusion of directions and intentions and a perfect maelstrom of ways. Even the shoe clerk became slightly confused when he tried to explain the shopping district. You are likely to go 'round and 'round the same block like a child starting out to stick a paper tail on a paper donkey and sticking it, instead, on the piano stool. Before you can get your sense of direction in hand and start off confidently east or west, north or south, you behave as I did when I first went to London and circled Piccadilly four times before I could determine on Regent Street.

To be sure that he had made it explicit, the shoe clerk went with us to the shop door and did the whole thing over again, in pantomime, on the sidewalk.

"Now remember, Charles Street runs north and south, Baltimore east and west."

"All that for two pairs of gums," I said to Allan, as we splashed off hopefully.

"You are in the South," Allan answered.

Of course we were. I had forgotten, because

no one had said "cy-ah" for car and no one had said "I reckon" for "I guess," and no one had called Allan "Colonel" and the negroes had said "Sure" instead of "Yessah." The South? Well, perhaps, but not the South I had been led to expect. We set out to look for the Charles-Baltimore axis so that we could revolve on it with the familiarity of old residents. In our pursuit we crossed both of the streets a dozen times, but we never did find out where they crossed each other. Still, one chimera is as good as another, and we saw Baltimore while we were playing hide-and-seek with this one.

The city seemed to me a little like Genoa, substantial, rich, massive architecturally, with its feet in the water and its head in the clouds, pompous, very orderly and always flavoured with the heady smell of wharves and ships. Like Genoa, it spills steeply down-hill to the harbour. And the business streets, where dignified merchants rub elbows with sea captains, stevedores and sailors, are only a block or two away from the wharves. And yet Baltimore had a narrow escape from being an inland city. It is over two hundred miles from the Atlantic Ocean, and only the obliging width and depth of Chesapeake Bay make it possible for Baltimore to call herself a great seaport. Big ships

and little ships, any sort of ships at all, sail up the broad Chesapeake, through Patapsco Bay to the very front door of the city. Some of them anchor within sight of the domed tower of the City Hall and the Post Office campanile, so close to the heart of the city that ships' bells can be set by the B. & O. clock.

While I should have hunted up the Board of Trade to find out all I could about exports and imports and how many million dollars' worth of business floats up and down Chesapeake Bay in a year, I played truant and went with Allan to the water-front. It was more fun to splash up and down the docks than to collect statistics, percentages, estimates, pamphlets, prophecies and Board of Trade superlatives. I could see for myself that Baltimore is rich, important and powerful, and that her municipal wharves entertain the biggest and the littlest ships that float. I could see for myself what the magnificent future, "after the war," holds for Baltimore in the way of great and greater commercial power. All the ravings of her inspired press agents, and she has many, every citizen from the oldest living inhabitant to the youngest pickaninny combining to blow the civic horn, could not have added to my admiration. So if you expect to find out how many tins of canned oysters

are shipped in a week from Baltimore to oysterless Middle West cities, you need not turn another page. I know that Baltimore is rich and successful, but she is also aristocratic and she resents the shoutings of her voluntary press agents. She has always lived in fine houses, she has always worn rich silks and rare laces; it is in her blood to entertain beautifully and lavishly and to be gracious, proud and inconspicuous. Baltimore is the impeccable matron of American cities, and I am not sure which of the two, Baltimore or her distinguished grandmother, Charleston, is the most perfect example of American aristocracy. And to go on with the allegory—Boston is Charleston's unmarried, middle-aged daughter, a trifle more austere than her married sister, Baltimore, opinionated, scrupulous, intelligent and dowdy. New York is a free-lance person of whom none of them approve, but they steal away to visit her now and then, to smoke one of her cigarettes, sip at one of her cocktails and admire her gowns. St. Louis, St. Paul, Detroit, Jacksonville and Chicago are all "young things"; they haven't decided whether to take after Baltimore or Boston, or to follow in the unholy footsteps of the wicked and fascinating and altogether too gay New York. In the meantime, they wear very

short skirts and are openly proud of being rich; they drive fast automobiles, and dance and talk at the top of their voices and spend a great deal of money.

I wouldn't dream of talking about Baltimore's bank account. It has been accumulating during two hundred years of peace and prosperity. Even since the Barons of Baltimore, those likable Irishmen from County Longford, established the town, its lucky star has burned unfalteringly. Baltimore seemed to have been blest with a happy destiny. It was not attacked during the Revolutionary War, all of the fighting being done with sticks and stones and the vituperative tongues of its mob leaders. During the War of 1812, although England attacked by land and sea, Baltimore slapped the enemy so soundly that he never returned to offer the other cheek. Francis Scott Key was so elated by the American victory that he wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner" in celebration of the tattered flag that still floated above Fort McHenry after an all-night bombardment by the British. Hats off to Key, who could rhyme in the midst of battle, but why, oh, why are his verses so hard to remember and so horribly hard to sing? "What so prou-oudly we hay-il"

is one of the poetic jaw-breakers that make national anthems sore trials.

Baltimore recovered from the War of 1812 with the short convalescence of the victorious. And during the Civil War, while the people of Baltimore were torn between North and South, the city itself was outside the war zone and did not share in the Southern tragedy of destruction and financial ruin. It was not until 1904 that the lucky star blinked out for a moment and a voracious and implacable fire destroyed over a thousand buildings in the commercial part of the city. I am awfully tempted to say something about that famous phœnix which has risen, in literature, so many millions of times from the ashes. But this is what really happened. Baltimore looked at the smouldering ruins of herself, said, "Oh, bother!" and put on a new dress. Where the rows and rows of red brick houses and red brick warehouses and red brick office buildings had been, an impressive stone and granite district appeared miraculously. The lucky star came out from behind the obscuring cloud and has been shining ever since.

The rest of Baltimore's history seems to be a recital of achievements, as if the inhabitants had had an overwhelming ambition to be first in

war, first in peace, and first in everything else: the first gas company, the first railroad, the first locomotive, the first balloon ascension, the first telegraph message, the first electric railway. One has a mental picture of the whole population absorbed in invention. It is even dangerous to launch a *bon mot* without taking out a patent. Everything clever and modern and indispensable seems to have originated in Baltimore. But if you should ask a Baltimorean what his city's chief source of fame is, he will probably answer "Whiskey" or "Beautiful women," or, if he is blind to the other two virtues, "Monuments." And if he happens to be a gourmet, he will shut his eyes and answer, "Chicken à la Maryland and oysters." Baltimore is that sort of city; you love her for her infinite variety.

I loved her for her dignity and because at the end of her teeming business streets there is always a glimpse of tangled masts and spars and slanting funnels. Time that should have been given to Walter's Art Museum, to Millet and Meissonier and Rosa Bonheur, I gave to the water-front streets and to staring into the dusty windows of ship chandlers' shops at anchors and chains, gasolene motors, tarred rope, compasses and rubber boots. Hours that I

should have given to the modern frescoes by Blashfield, Turner and La Farge in the Court House I gave to the fish market. I was not as mad, perhaps, as I seemed to be, for the fish market was a place of striking beauty. There were heaps and mounds of silver fish, iridescent, white-bellied, glistening; the market floor was wet and shiny, the high-arched roof was full of shadows, and everywhere, in groups of two and three, buyers and sellers bargained over the dead fish, lifting them up, tossing them back again so that there were silver flashes from hand to hand.

When Allan and I were children we were never in doubt as to what we were "going to be" when we grew up. We were sailors from the time we were old enough to know the difference between a ship and a cradle. We sailed around the world three times before we were nine—in the dining-room table turned upside down. Even in those nursery days we had a Conradian taste for sandy shoals and deep jungles, although where we could have formed the taste is a mystery, unless it came to us through hereditary memory. When we were nearer twelve we really sailed down the sea, not in the dining-room table but in a dory rigged somehow with a top-heavy sail made of a linen sheet.

We had all of Buzzard's Bay as our ocean, and sailed so far out into it in our absurd cockleshell that on two different occasions we lost sight of land altogether. This was a risky business for children, but it was glorious fun, and with the adventure, the wind, the salt spray, the nearness and adorable fearfulness of the sea we were dedicated to a lifelong worship. We prance at the very sight of a ship, and if we could afford it we would spend our lives making 'round-the-world trips in tramp steamers and leisurely sailing vessels bound from New York to Hong Kong and return. We are happiest when we are leaning on a ship's rail in some blazing hot southern port; we are most ecstatic when we are aboard a steamer outward bound, when crowded life drops behind the horizon with the towers and pinnacles of New York and there is nothing on the rim of the round, round world but clouds and the long, black streamers of smoke rolling back from the ship's funnels.

So in Baltimore we gravitated naturally toward Light Street and the Pratt Street wharves, not only because the town slopes that way and we followed the line of least resistance, but because we were lured that way by the smell of the sea. The produce fleet held us for hours.

The little schooners and weather-beaten luggers come to town at the crack of dawn, bringing fruits and vegetables or staggering under mounds of fresh oysters, and we liked to watch the confusion of the landing and unloading. A swarm of hucksters and itinerant dealers appeared on the wharves, and there was always a tangle of delivery wagons and trucks standing wheel to wheel along the water-front. We liked to follow the morning's supplies over to the Lexington Market, where they were sorted and arranged to catch Lady Baltimore's eye when she did her shopping later in the morning.

The famous Baltimore "clipper" has vanished from the seas together with America's supremacy in fast sailing craft. The wide-winged, narrow clippers used to fly from port to port with incredible speed, Yankee ships and Yankee crews writing the story of American courage and seamanship in big letters across the most romantic page in maritime history. Ocean liners and ungainly, weather-beaten transports and tramps have taken their place. We saw several of the plucky blockade-runners at Baltimore, some of them emblazoned with huge neutral flags for the information of U-boat captains who do not always respect their neutrality, some

I HELD AN UMBRELLA OVER ALLAN WHILE HE SKETCHED THE BIG TRANSPORT "GREKLAND"

of them as grim and sombre and businesslike as battle cruisers. I held an umbrella over Allan, like an attendant slave, while he sketched the big transport *Grekland*. The ship herself was indifferent to our homage for she was receiving a cargo of grain for some hunger-pinched European nation, but the swarm of painters who were covering her battered plates with checkerboard squares of red, craved immortality. They caught sight of Allan and shouted their utter willingness to pose indefinitely.

"Hey! Put me in, Mister!"

"Hi, you! Don't forget me!"

And when the sketch was finished they hoisted themselves up to the *Grekland's* deck, like agile monkeys shinnying up a stick, and came running ashore to see themselves as "ithers" saw them. Allan had to make a dash for it, for he hadn't put the painters in at all, and he couldn't have told them that they "cluttered up the composition." If he had, the painters might have cluttered up the artist, the sketch portfolio and the attendant slave. So we ran at top speed toward Light Street, splattering ourselves with the mud of many puddles.

It rained and it rained. Wherever we went we advanced under that dripping umbrella, and since Allan tops me by a foot, I caught all

the drippings on my hat brim, whence they seeped down my coat collar and into my shoes again; my skirts were soggy, my muff looked like an immersed Angora kitten. And it was cold! But for one thing I was grateful—Baltimore traffic is light. We dashed from sidewalk to sidewalk only to find that the nearest automobile was a block away, while the traffic policemen leaned on their mud-guards and shouted with laughter. So we learned our lesson and sauntered sedately in front of street cars, trusting to Southern chivalry, even in inanimate things, to save us.

The streets are as well-paved as the promised golden paths of Paradise, and laid with a varied assortment of brick, asphalt, wood-block and macadam. Baltimore thoroughfares begin with one colour and end with another; they start out paved with smooth cobbles and wind up with an artless design done in pink brick. The result rivals the famous coat of the Biblical Joseph for kaleidoscopic variety, and makes one wonder whether a futurist effect in tinted asphalt might not give Fifth Avenue a decided *cachet!*

But in spite of its frivolous paving stones, Baltimore is always discreet. Even on the outskirts of the city there is more or less dignity.

I did not see any tenements at all, only rows and rows of little red brick houses, each with its short flight of white steps leading to the front door. And I discovered that the middle-class women of Baltimore spend their lives in a futile effort to keep those eternal rows of white steps clean. They scrub in the morning, they scrub in the afternoon, they are still scrubbing when night falls. And as soon as the steps are clean, the dirty boots of "mere man" tramp over them again. If I were a Baltimore housewife, I would buy a set of iron doorsteps and use the white wooden ones for firewood. Or else I would attach a lawn sprinkler to the top step and fold my hands. Hoopla!

We passed miles and miles of those decent, white-trimmed, very respectable brick houses on the way to Fort McHenry. The stuffy street car, bearing white and black passengers in more or less close proximity, left us at the Fort gate and went back to the city. I don't know what impulse started us on the mad pilgrimage, for historic battlegrounds and forts are never impressive. In fifty years, even Champagne will cease to affect us as it should. We were the only tourists who had dared to venture into Fort McHenry that day, and we battled our way around the ramparts, slipping and sliding

over the frost-encrusted grass, in the teeth of a bitter gale. Armistead, done in bronze, faces Patapsco Bay from the walls he defended so magnificently in 1814. And behind him, where Key saw the star-spangled banner fluttering bravely on that famous dawn, a tattered flag, very stained and forlorn, whipped and rattled in the cold wind. We skirted the Fort and rushed back to the stuffy street car, very depressed.

There are no baroque excrescences in Baltimore's architecture, and, except for the startling onion-towers of the Cathedral, the whole city seems to have made up its mind to be as constrained as a modern emotional actress. The Cathedral is a wild combination of the classic and the Oriental, the only Catholic church I have ever been in that has not made me regret that I do not belong to the old faith. There was no mystery in its shadows, no sombre flickering of candles, no faint odour of incense. It seemed to us that Baltimore could never mean to America what Rome means to Europe, for one would not make a pilgrimage to its Cathedral as one journeys to St. Peter's. We should expect exalted architecture in our cathedrals—lacy fan vaultings, frescoed choirs, windows that smoulder like the fires of an ardent heart, rich chapels, shadows, silence and beauty. For why

should we dedicate anything to God that is not the best we have to give?

The rest of Baltimore pays strict attention to beauty, and there is something in the city's physiognomy not unlike the studied elegance of Paris and Munich. Automobiles are parked in an orderly way and are sternly warned not to stand at street crossings; disfiguring telephone and lighting wires are buried underground, like family skeletons, and there are parks and neat grass plots everywhere. We splashed through street after street of fine old red brick houses with simple doorways and wide windows curtained with mathematical precision, veiled just so far and no further. We wondered how the exact position of the window curtains was determined—by popular vote, by a tacit understanding as binding as a sworn pledge, or simply because of an inherited sense of the proprieties! Civic pride in Baltimore permits itself only one exuberance. Statues and monuments fill the landscape and clog the public squares—there are statues to the heroes of 1814, Civil War monuments, Columbus monuments, a delicate column in memory of those Marylanders who fought during the Revolution, and an impressive shaft topped by a statue of Washington. Was it my imagination, or does the

Washington monument smack of those Roman columns (there is one in the Piazza Colonna, I remember) which have been deprived of their pagan heroes and supplied with saints? Is it my imagination, or has Washington lost his martial air? He stretches out his hand as if he were bestowing a blessing on Baltimore, and he is so far away that he might be St. Peter or St. Paul. He only lacks a halo to fit into the Catholic atmosphere of the locality, a gigantic St. George facing the Cathedral.

On either side of the monument there are neat, well-clipped little parks, Charles and Monument Streets obligingly becoming Washington Place and Mount Vernon Place in honour of the aloof hero, and decking themselves out with pleasant fountains and trees for several blocks. In Washington Place, not at all dwarfed by the great shaft but holding their own through sheer perfection, there are a half dozen bronzes by the French master Barye, coloured by rain and sun, snow and fog, with a beauty as rare as the opalescent magic of Cellini's *Perseus*. We stood in the rain and blessed it for treating bronze as it does, and blessed Baltimore for putting Barye's bronzes where the rain can get at them.

Somehow the wicket gate of a museum, click-

ing me into a shrine of art, deprives me of enthusiasms; I am tired before I am fairly inside. I don't like to see intimate masterpieces hung in rows like dead fishermen's trophies. I don't care for statues placed side by side in cold, whitely illuminated halls, like bloodless corpses in a marble morgue. I want to see pictures in houses and statues in gardens and jewelry worn against the living flesh and books on library shelves. I would walk miles to see a half-forgotten Madonna in a dim and dusty church or to hold a silver altar lamp in my hands while an untruthful sexton babbles its fabulous and wholly imaginary history. There is a Lorenzetto in a baptistery at Siena that is more precious to me than all the masterpieces in the Uffizi, simply because I saw it by the light of a flickering wax taper one blue twilight a long time ago. The Baryes in Washington Place in Baltimore have just the same quiet way of saying, "You don't have to look at us if you don't want to. You don't have to whisper in our presence. We are not in a gallery. Here we are, passerby, for your delectation."

We were disappointed because we did not see any of Baltimore's famous beauties; I had wanted to make comparisons, and Allan—well, he was disappointed anyway. I couldn't find

out where Baltimore beauties stay when it rains, for certainly they do not risk their loveliness out of doors. Ever since Miss Betsy Patterson of Baltimore enraptured Jerome Bonaparte and married him, Maryland beauty is supposed to have been of the blighting, death-dealing variety. Virginia argues the claim because one of the royal Murats of Naples married a Virginian and "lived happily ever after" in Tallahassee. So that to-day skittish young men avoid Maryland and Virginia as they would the plague, remembering what happened to two princes a long time ago when young men were braver in love.

The street crowds in Baltimore were like street crowds the world over, or at least, the Occidental world over! There were distinctive American differences—the men wore felt hats turned up in the back and down in the front, they carried their unlighted cigars fixed immovably in the corner of their mouths, and they hurried prodigiously. The women looked like New Yorkers, but I detected a slight variation in the angle of their hats. Not a damnable variation like the Swedish, which puts millinery atop hair-dressing as if a hat were a boat and a bang a wave (I have no double intentions), nor the English variation which places

headgear on the shoulder blades. The Baltimore variation is a slight surrender to the mode. "Let me see from under my hat," says Lady Baltimore, and sees whether it is fashionable or not. New York's baleful influence in high white kid shoes, run over at the heel, had spread like the measles, and there were samples of that remarkable New York product, the "young thing," short-waisted and fragile, anæmic and bored, powdered beyond belief on the tip of the nose, gum-chewing, independent, and sophisticated. She had the balm, in Baltimore, of a slightly softer speech, although you must go further south to hear "gy-aden" for garden. The rest of the crowd was made up of negroes and sea-going men, the negroes all inconceivably forlorn and tattered, the sea-going men wearing those blue jerseys, a little too short in the sleeves, and the visored caps which seem to be a part of their traditional makeup. The most respectable and self-respecting darkies lurked in the dining-rooms of the Rennert, where they murmured suggestions or swayed from the kitchens to the serving tables bearing enormous trays on the pink palms of their hands. They seemed to enjoy the luxury of their surroundings, their white waistcoats and the pleasant uncertainty of tips.

We encountered the other variety of negro on the way to Annapolis, when a deputy sheriff boarded the electric car with two black prisoners. Just before the car started, a police patrol brought the wretched fellows at a gallop; they were shoved, pushed, pulled and jostled through the crowd and put aboard the car with scant ceremony. Shackled to the sheriff's wrists, they rode nearly the whole way to Annapolis, spoiling the landscape, for me at least. They were pitiful and revolting, criminally insane, the sheriff said, and although they were big enough to have strangled their sandy-haired Irish captor with one hand, they sat facing him in a wretched, dumb silence, their huge shackled hands hanging limply together. We had not crossed the Mason-Dixon line, but the dark strain was already dominant in the discordant national symphony. As we went further south we were to hear it grow louder and louder, in a crescendo of intensity, reaching its climax at Savannah and dwindling again in Texas to minor melody. It seemed to us that the negroes were shabbiest in Baltimore and Charleston, that they were most likable in Norfolk, that they were most offensive at Savannah and most picturesque in New Orleans and St. Augustine. The upstart type has crept further and further

THE ONE- AND TWO-STORIED HOUSES AND COBBLED STREETS REMINDED US OF CLOVELLY

into the South, to the great disadvanage of the self-respecting, infinitely better class that has not forgotten how to say "Yessah" and "Yes'm." A Virginian said to me, "We could not do without the darkies. They are better labour, for us who understand them, than Italians." And he added, "You Northerners don't know how to manage 'em. A nice combination of the authoritative and the paternal does the trick. But you have to be born to it." I do not pretend to know whether he was right, but I do know that the jaunty, overdressed, impudent and self-assertive negro cannot possibly be the result of a paternal authority. Some one is to blame, perhaps, who was not, to quote the Virginian, "born to it."

For an hour the two ragged black wretches stared at the floor and let the bleak landscape race past without once turning their heads to glance at it. Patches of snow were still lying in the hollows, and spitting clouds raced close to the earth, almost touching the pointed tips of the black cypress pines. The approach to Annapolis, like Annapolis itself, is not spectacular. The electric car jangles into the town and puts you down at the door of the State House, or, more exactly, a short block away from it, with as little ostentation as possible.

Annapolis was sound asleep when we were there. The Capitol dozed on its hilltop, the little rows of quaint and ramshackled houses snoozed gently, the enormous Academy buildings snored outright in profound slumber. I don't know whether the town was indulging in a daily siesta or whether the entire population had gone to Baltimore for the afternoon, for Annapolis, like Washington, is a suburb of the Monument City! The only living things we encountered in our wanderings were the sentry at the Academy gates, a priest, two erect cadets and a nigger's hound!

Annapolis is the oldest chartered city in America, a very small city indeed to stagger under such an honour. It is besides the capital of Maryland, and I was so sentimentally affected by the precious soil under my feet that I hummed "Maryland, my Maryland" with great stress, for even nomads thrill to the feel of native earth. I could remember the tune, but I confess to my everlasting shame that Randall's poetry was beyond me.

The old town is splendidly picturesque. The one and two-storied houses and the cobbled streets, dipping steeply down to the waterfront, reminded us of Clovelly, Clovelly of blessed Devonshire memory! For Annapolis is

first and last an English town, a town of red brick and high garden walls, quaint corners, tidy shops and an air of great decorum and friendliness. Queen Anne and the Georges left a characteristic architecture, beautified by its colonial transplanting into something rare and distinguished. The Brice house shows what America, plus an English heritage, can do architecturally. If America would only go on doing it!

The Naval Academy buildings are a sore disappointment, for you must pass the dignified and aquiline State House, where Washington surrendered his commission in 1783, and where the First Constitutional Convention was held three years later, on your way to the Academy close. The gaunt ugliness of the College buildings is softened by wide-spreading lawns, clipped like a German pate, and by groups of magnificent trees. But it is perfectly apparent that since its foundation in 1845 the Naval Academy has been accumulating ponderous and hideous buildings, reaching a sort of hysterical climax in the new chapel, which rises like a gilded and frosted sugar birthday cake over the body of John Paul Jones. If Jones could see his sepulchre he would beg pitifully to be taken

back to France and re-entombed in his obscure and well-nigh forgotten French grave.

Down on the shore of the little Severn River, where we had wandered to recover from our architectural tirade, we encountered the negro hound. I don't mean that he was a black hound —far from it. He was, or had been before he rolled in acres of thick Maryland mud, as white as the driven snow. We knew he was a negro hound by the humble look in his eyes, the ashamed droop of his thick tail. He wouldn't come to us, although I whistled and crooned and begged. All the while Allan was drawing a cluster of small sailing boats and dories, I wooed the hound. He wagged, he rolled his eyes at me and lolled out his tongue in a wide grin, but he was as bashful as a pickaninny. He knew better than to take the caresses of a white hand; he knew I was mistaken; he apologised and tried to explain that he was poor and humble, and that he had dedicated his love to another race. He struggled to tell me that he knew his place and that he had so far forgotten his past that he had tried to change his colour by rolling in the mud; if he had achieved a mulatto complexion, he was not to blame. Would I excuse him? I would and did. I stopped my clucking and said, in a stern voice,

A CLUSTER OF SMALL SAILING BOATS AND DORIES

smiling broadly, "You run right along home. D'you heah me, you good-fo'-nothing houn'?" And he leaped for joy and trotted away, enormously relieved.

The oyster boats cluster like barnacles along the water-front, so close-packed that you can walk from one to the other for blocks without taking a single long step. They were the only craft we saw, although only a half a mile away our future admirals were learning the super-art of seamanship. A thick mist had obligingly followed us down from Baltimore and hung like a blanket over Annapolis, obscuring the bay entirely. So we climbed back into the town, pursuing beautiful architecture as long as there was a vestige of the pale twilight left. The two erect cadets, laced into their jackets to the bursting point and very shy, as all real seamen are when they are ashore, directed us to the electric car's starting place. But we lost it again, since Annapolis streets take their own sweet way and ramble on as inconsequentially as Confederate veterans. We had to be set right, very appropriately, by a benign priest who was pacing up and down a garden path on the other side of a low brick wall. Allan looked over the top and lifted his hat, breaking in on the evening's meditation with a subdued and gentle question.

"Straight ahead," was the priest's answer.

So we turned humbly away, set at last on the right path, and determined, come what would, to keep going straight ahead.

CHAPTER III

WHICH CONTAINS A TROLLY TRIP AND A LAUNDRY GRIEVANCE

INLAND steamers are the pariahs of the ship world. They are neither fish, flesh nor fowl. River, lake and bay steamers, sound and harbour steamers, channel and canal steamers—they are all alike, with their excursion manner, their cramped deck space, their red carpets and velvet lounge chairs, their piles of folded and dingy camp stools, and, in America, their horribly sleepy coloured stewards in crumpled white coats. When the porter at the Rennert advised us to go on to Norfolk by water, we knew what we were being let in for. But we bought our tickets because we hoped that the fog would lift before morning and disclose the pageant of Norfolk harbour and Hampton Roads. Vain hope! Smug and credulous Nauthoress and Nillustrator! We should not have expected miracles of a Chesapeake Bay fog!

We permitted the positive porter to transfer

us from the hotel to the dock while we were still under the spell of his eloquence and before we could convince him, or each other, that it was bound to be a foggy night and that we might just as well wait another day. It was too late to turn back when the taxi drew up at the dock, for an army of stewards fell on our luggage (one for each suitcase and two for each trunk), and escorted us to our staterooms. Allan tipped six of them for service and eight more for moral assistance, and after reading the framed warnings to lock the door, to watch out for thieves, to look under the berth for life-preservers, and to turn out the light, we went on deck, profoundly depressed.

The interior of an excursion steamer always reminds me of a varnished and upholstered columbarium. The restless passengers pop in and out of their tomb doors like lively ghosts or sit, first a passenger, then a nickel spittoon, in neat regularity, the entire length of the prodigious corridors. The typical excursionist resists fresh air with an almost fanatical violence; he stays in the red-velvet saloons, reading highly-coloured magazines and only venturing on deck for a hurried smoke. He is impervious to sunsets and dawns, to the beauty of passing ships and the mystery of the sea.

The Norfolk steamer left Baltimore at dusk with the casual and leisurely farewell of a ferry-boat. The pallid passengers, already seasick, had taken to their staterooms or to their velvet lounges, the stewards had fallen permanently asleep, and Allan and I were alone on the wet, slippery stern deck where we could feel the violent shiverings of the screw as the steamer churned and backed out of the slip into the harbour. Baltimore glittered behind us in a subdued, well-bred way—discreet as always! Only one electric sign, shrieking Coca-Cola in letters six feet high, dripped and blinked in liquid sheets of light, and in the heart of the city a huge illuminated clock face explained that it was half-past six.

The steamer edged into the wider channel and swung around, kicking up foam like a youngster learning how to swim. Then we faced Patapsco Bay, Baltimore apparently shifting to the wrong side of the horizon with our turning and dropping rapidly behind like a conflagration snuffed out by the sea. On both banks of the bay long strings of light rimmed the water's edge; factory chimneys flared in dramatic outbursts against the gathering darkness of the sky. Tugs crossed our bow trailing fiery reflections, launches tossed in our wake a moment like

bobbing corks and then disappeared; schooners drifted by, incredibly remote and mysterious. And always, from the surface of the water, mist wreaths rose, twisted, tore loose and curled upward, drifting across the deck and powdering our cheeks and hair with iridescent sequins.

"Dirty weather," I said in a professional tone.

"Very thick," Allan agreed solemnly.

We stood mournfully by the rail, the mist stinging our faces, and exchanged reminiscences of fogs at sea. This is a trick we have when we want to test each other's courage. Of course no one ever wins the game for it would not be cricket to exhibit frazzled nerves. And unless Allan should happen to read this book (which is wholly improbable), he will never know that I am desperately afraid of encountering fogs in narrow channels.

The fog that enveloped us that night blotted out the world completely before we had left Patapsco Bay; in Chesapeake Bay it became a blanket, impenetrable, as tangible as a wall, as terrifying as an atrocious nightmare which wipes out sense and sensibility and leaves nothing but uncertainty and terror. But I turned my coat collar up around my ears, paraded back and forth across the tiny deck and pretended that I liked it.

Inside, where the hermetically-sealed excursionists read Hearst literature and chewed gum, a musical sailor played syncopated melodies on the toneless piano; "Ragging the Scale" floated out to us, making strange discords with the lugubrious croakings of the foghorn.

All night long the shivering blasts shook the steamer like an ague chill while we tossed in our narrow berths and put the hard pillows now under one cheek, now under the other in a futile struggle to sleep. Fainter, groaning horns always answered, now to starboard, now to port, now dead ahead, like the melancholy wails of lost souls. I was alert and active all night, hopping out of bed to look into the impenetrable fog, seeing nothing but my own shadow drifting, grotesquely projected against the compact mist. Like the nervous motorist who drives an automobile from the back seat by concentrating unselfishly on the road, I navigated the tortuous channels of Chesapeake Bay by standing in the open window of my stateroom and giving my whole attention to the elusive foghorns. Like will-o'-the-wisps they skipped from side to side of the bay, tormenting pilots and upsetting steamer schedules. My watchfulness must have done some good, for towards morning a sleepy steward rapped at my door and said that we

were comin' into Ole Point Comfo't presently and that the gen'mun in numbah fo'ty-fo' wanted me to come out on deck.

Apparently Allan still hoped for an eleventh-hour miracle and a glimpse of Hampton Roads and Norfolk Harbor at dawn. I locked my door and tiptoed down a snoring corridor, past stewards and stewardesses asleep in abandoned attitudes under the full glare of many electric lights, past the musical sailor stretched full length on a red velvet divan with his round cap over his face, past sleepy watchmen and yawning deckhands. The rest of the passengers slept soundly in their columbarium roosts, sceptical or initiated or perhaps forewarned that the steamer would be late. I found Allan on the forward deck, gazing hopefully into a dripping wall of fog.

"Did you sleep?" I asked.

"Yes, like a top," he lied.

And I echoed, trying to open my eyes wide and to look brisk, "So did I! Like a top!"

The steamer and the fog were playing an exciting game of hide-and-seek. The fog laid traps, becoming at once opaque and impenetrable, parting suddenly to show us the stern lights of a schooner just ahead, then blotting out the vision forever. The steamer advanced cau-

tiously, slowing down so that the revolutions of the screw ceased altogether and there was no sound but the slight hissing of the water along the sides, then leaping ahead again at top speed like a hunting dog that has picked up its quarry's scent. Bell buoys, light buoys, the pilot and Providence got us safely into Old Point Comfort.

We heard voices before the pier loomed out of the shadows at all. Then we saw electric lights, blurring round holes in the fog, and the steamer churned and splashed sideways toward them. As soon as she was made fast a swarm of negro stevedores rushed aboard, trundling barrows and trucks back and forth like toiling demon ghosts.

Dawn overtook us there, a steel-blue dawn that only deepened the confusing mystery of the fog. Imperceptibly, the piles and shedding of the wharf appeared, we saw a motor car standing apparently on the top of the water, long bands of light like prodigious antennæ stabbing the darkness before it. And suddenly, as if an obscuring veil had been whisked away, we saw the famous towers of the Hotel Chamberlain, then the enormous façade and a few scattered lights blotted and indistinct.

Gibraltar wears a Prudential face for most

of us, and the Hotel Chamberlain—quick, what does it mean to you? A gay scene, of course—a foreground of warships, white duck officers and ladies with parasols, a background filled with the biggest hotel in the world! Advertising has made the Chamberlain the most famous hotel in America—its picture is as familiar to us as Mennen's celebrated ugliness, Phœbe Snow and the bearded Smith Brothers. I was shocked to find that the Chamberlain, like Mark Twain's woolliest dog, wasn't so "dinged" big, after all! It *is* a large hotel, but years of advertising have created an imaginative colossus, a sort of wooden Louvre where gay ladies and immaculate officers dance from morning to night. Negro stevedores where I had pictured admirals and generals! I felt that somehow I had been cheated.

Nor was I the only one who expected gaiety and leisure. A coloured person of imagination was leaning against one of the trucks down on the wharf doing nothing very well.

"Look heah," one of the labouring stevedores yelled at him, "why don't you get to work, you good-fo'-nothin' nigger?"

The victim of Hotel Chamberlain advertising methods leaned more cozily against the truck. "Ah ain' lookin' fo' work, boss," said he,

THE FERRY SLIP AT NORFOLK

"s'long as Ah can find anything better to do."

We crossed to Norfolk between a double row of anchored ships all pathetically anxious to make themselves seen and heard. If we had been conquering heroes we could not have been given a more vociferous greeting—horns, bells, wailing battleship sirens, and whistling buoys warned us to keep to the channel, the whole crew of a small schooner standing on deck to pound on kitchen utensils until we were out of sight. So, triumphantly, we came to Norfolk.

Norfolk announces itself to the traveller by a huge sign advertising Anheuser-Busch, but Virginia has gone dry; Virginia, the land of mint juleps and convivial F. F. V. colonels, has gone bone dry! The head waiter at the Monticello informed us of the State's tragedy at breakfast, as if he were afraid that we might be in the New York habit of drinking cocktails at nine o'clock in the morning. The hotel dining-rooms are on the eighth floor, possibly to counteract the low spirits caused by this sudden abstinence. And, indeed, if anything could make one forget the lack of the stimulating toddy, the view from the Monticello windows ought to. Prohibition struck a hard blow at some of the Virginian hotels, and of course it put some very prosperous "pubs" out of business altogether,

but it is a comforting fact that being alcoholically dry has not hurt the State financially. The Monticello, which is the largest and most pretentious hotel in Norfolk, has balanced its deficit to a certain extent by charging ten cents an order for bread and butter. If it had done the same thing a year ago, the management would have netted something like fifteen thousand dollars on bread and butter alone. So there is a balm for every wound—even prohibition! I could not find out how the negroes feel about their loss. There used to be a bar in the coloured quarter in Norfolk where fourteen bartenders, each with a cash register before him, served drinks to thirsty Ethiopians from dawn to dawn. The thirty-five thousand negroes of the quarter must have been as insatiable as the ladies of Whitechapel. Now they are reduced to their legal quart obtainable only once in so often, delivered by express and as sweet to their thirsty tongues as dew in the parching desert. In Norfolk they tell the story of the unfortunate darkey who went to the express office for his quart a week before Christmas. As he was coming out again with the precious bottle tucked under his arm, he slipped on the icy pavement, lost his footing and fell headlong, smashing his

treasure into fragments. He sat up and contemplated the ruins.

"Oh, Gawd," he said bitterly, "oh, Gawd, Christmas am done *come and gone!*"

The negro quarter is in the centre of Norfolk, but it does not encroach upon the white district; black does not mix with white in the city, each tide of humanity flowing side by side like the waters of the Rhone and the Arve, unmingling and distinct. Nor do the negroes seem to overflow even as pedestrians into the rest of the town; they stay in their own few square blocks, attend their own theatres and stare in at our own shop windows. They are for the most part unskilled labourers and do not work together with white men.

But even without a preponderance of African duskiness the streets of Norfolk are colourful enough. At night, when the festive strings of sputtering arc lamps and electric bulbs are lighted, making a brilliant arch over the shopping streets, Norfolk is amazingly gay. Sailors and marines from Portsmouth, soldiers from Fortress Monroe and aviators from Newport News give a martial touch to the street crowds that is not at all usual in a country where there is no universal passion for uniforms. We heard many English voices as we wandered up

and down Granby Street, for there is a brisk horse-transport between Norfolk, Newport News and Bristol and London which brings an increasing number of British ships to Virginia.

Very little ammunition leaves the port for Europe, for which I should think the Virginians must be profoundly grateful. They have left that grave responsibility to New York because the Empire State is nearer the base of supplies. But it would have been a strange analogy if Virginia had sent shells for use against England's enemies in return for Lord Dunmore's cannon balls, fired in 1776 into the little city of Norfolk!

One of the balls is hidden in the English brick walls of St. Paul's church, but I did not see it for I am trying to forget old rancours now that America and England have become flesh and blood allies in the great struggle for democracy. And Norfolk, except for the crumbling walls of old St. Stephen's, was entirely destroyed by Dunmore when he turned the frigate *Liverpool's* guns on the rebel town and reduced everything except the inhabitants' courage to dust. Up to that time, Norfolk had been loyally English. It was established on fifty acres of ground bought from a certain Nicholas Wise, who must have been an inveterate smoker or

else a shrewd judge of the future, for he accepted ten thousand pounds of tobacco in exchange for his land. And this was in 1680, before the United States Tobacco Company dreamed of existing! Anglomania was still rampant in 1746, when the men of Norfolk carried an effigy of the Pretender, Charles Edward Stuart, through the streets of the town and then hanged and burned it. This was "strafing" with a vengeance, and it did not seem possible that even such an arbitrary measure as the detested Stamp Act could shift public opinion and set an American Hymn of Hate ringing 'round the world.

Ever since the Revolution the Virginia Peninsula has had its thumb in the war-pie. Great and decisive battles were fought over the historic ground during the War of 1812 and again during the Civil War. And to-day one passes from the monuments of the historic dead to the feverish activities of the patriotic living by simply crossing the Elizabeth River to the Portsmouth Navy Yard in one direction, and Hampton Roads to Fortress Monroe and the Curtiss Flying School in the other. For Nature planned a great destiny for Virginia when she arranged that Chesapeake Bay, Hampton Roads, the James and the York rivers and Norfolk

Harbor should be within a stone's throw of each other. Captain John Smith, who began to advertise Old Point Comfort in 1607, three hundred years before the publicity machinery of the Hotel Chamberlain was set in motion, wrote an ecstatic description of the peninsula. Smith was the Theodore Roosevelt of his day—an ardent explorer, an adventurous spirit, strenuous, enthusiastic and indefatigable. His account of the Virginian settlement sounds like Roosevelt turned right about face and transplanted into the seventeenth century.

"There is but one entrance into this country, and that is at the mouth of a goodly bay eighteen or twenty miles broad. The cape on the south is called Cape Henry, in honour of our most noble Prince; the north cape is called Cape Charles, in honour of the worthy Duke of York. The isles before are called Smith Isles, by the name of the discoverer. Within is a country that may have the prerogatives over the most pleasant places known, for earth and heaven never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation. The mildness of the air, the fertility of the soil, and the situation of the rivers are so propitious to the use of man, as no place is more convenient for pleasure, profit, and man's sustenance under any latitude

THE NAVY YARD GATE, PORTSMOUTH

or climate. So then, here is a place, a nurse for soldiers, a practice for mariners, a trade for merchants, a reward for the good, and that which is most of all, a business (most acceptable to God) to bring such poor infidels to the knowledge of God and His Holy Gospel."

Like Roosevelt, who replied cryptically to those questioners of the River of Doubt, *"It is still there,"* Captain Smith let posterity decide whether or not the Virginia Peninsula was worth discovering. He dubbed its furthermost tip Old Point Comfort, although the name is more appropriate now than it could have been in those early days of suffering and discouragement when America was in the larva state and none of the wretched settlers knew what would emerge from the chrysalis—a grub, a butterfly, or an eagle. It is decidedly a comforting and comfortable Old Point to-day, for the powerful batteries of Fortress Monroe and Fort Wool, "Rip Raps," face the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, giving a pleasant sense of security to the Virginians, while the sun parlours and medicinal baths and wide porches of the Chamberlain attend to the creature comforts of hordes of tourists. The Government does not put too much faith in the thick walls and batteries of the two forts on Smith's Point, perhaps because the fall of Liége

went a long way to prove that even the thickest walls crumble under modern guns. A new fort is being built at Cape Henry, on the opposite side of Chesapeake Bay, just where the first English settlers landed in 1607.

We had been so baffled by the fog on the morning of our arrival at Norfolk that we went back to Old Point Comfort as soon as the sky had cleared and a pale winter sun had come out, crossing by ferry from Willoughby Spit. We walked around the high ramparts of Fortress Monroe, meeting with nothing more military than a lone bugler who was practising reveille and taps, very much off the key. We accosted him, as much to put a stop to the excruciating melody as to find out how to get out of the fort again, and as he walked with us across the pleasant enclosure, past barracks and officers' quarters to the main gate, he confided to us that a soldier's life is a dog's life and that he wanted to "get back to Jersey City." Apparently brass buttons and a brand-new bugle could not compensate for military restrictions. The confiding young bugler enjoyed life at Fortress Monroe as little perhaps as President Jefferson Davis did when he was confined there after the Civil War. The disillusioned president spent the year and a half of his imprisonment in Casement No. 2,

which is nothing more or less than an underground cell in spite of a pretence at windows and a pillared entrance. But Jefferson's confinement was no more restricted than the Pope's, and like the Pope he had the balm of beautiful trees, the thick shade of clustering live oaks, well-clipped lawns, flowers and a view from the high walls of his prison across incomparable country.

We were the proud possessors of a letter of introduction written by a very distinguished army officer to another very distinguished army officer who was stationed at Fortress Monroe, but we did not present it for fear that the whole military order of the day might be upset; two years in Germany had taught us a wholesome respect for gold braid. I remember sprinting through the English Gardens in Munich at top speed to get ahead of the swift-running Iser, for I had thrown the wrappings of a cake of Peters' Chocolate into the stream—and it was *verboten*. With the piece of chocolate in my hand and the wrapping paper sailing down the stream *before* me, the chain of damning evidence was complete. But what police officer could arrest a young lady with a piece of chocolate *pursued* by its wrappings? So I reasoned, and so I ran. Military rule had snatched hatpins out of my

unoffending hats. I had learned not to do this and not to do that, and to always step aside at the approach of a high-collared officer. In Germany one does instinctively what one is expected to do, like a well-disciplined automat. I had learned by heart the terrible story of the Berliner who was drowned, although he was a champion swimmer, because he had accidentally fallen into a river where it was *verboten* to swim! The military atmosphere of Fortress Monroe set in motion my slumbering awe, and it was not until we had poked our inquisitive noses into every corner of the impressive pile that I realised that it was not "forbidden" to walk on the grass, to pick the flowers, to stare at the batteries, to photograph the moat, to lounge under the trees or to engage the sentry in conversation. Military rule in America means spick-and-span order, brisk obedience and good behaviour, but it goes on the principle that we are all well-behaved until we prove, by blowing up the fort and stepping on the flag, that we are not. No one base enough to betray such trust had appeared in the vicinity of Fortress Monroe when we were there, for a brave flag rattled crisply over the ramparts. The huge disappearing guns looked formidable enough to have shattered any enemy, but we gazed at them with dubious en-

thusiasm, knowing that the inventors of *verboten* and hate were concentrating on still larger and more powerful guns.

The towering Hotel Chamberlain would make an excellent target, and no *camouflage* in the world could disguise its pinnacles and sun parlours as a mountain or as an innocent forest of young trees. So it is written in the contract which permitted the building of so conspicuous a landmark within a stone's throw of a great fort, that in case a hostile fleet should approach the Virginia coast the Chamberlain must be destroyed. Then the fat ladies in rockers and the sweet young girls and the white-duck officers must vacate for a stern necessity, and there will vanish from our leading magazines a familiar, gay advertisement and the ravings of an inspired press agent.

We did not stop to have lunch at the Chamberlain, but boarded an electric trolley and rode decorously, in spite of warnings to "keep head and limbs inside of car," to Newport News. I can not understand why the Newport News Electric Railway Company should be so suspicious of the self-control of its passengers. As far as I know, it is not the usual thing anywhere in America to ride with one's limbs (the delicacy of it!) dangling from trolley car windows!

Our progress lay across historic ground, so that when I try to chronicle the advance of the electric car and the sequence of dates, I feel that it would be an easier matter to write the history of the United States, and be done with it. For we passed through Hampton, Kecoughtan of the seventeenth century, where John Smith and the hungry idealists who had ventured into the wilderness with him received hospitality at the hands of the "terrible savage." A son of the famous chief Powhatan was the host on that occasion. When one considers the matter in the light of a neutral mind, the Indians always *were* hospitable until the white men took advantage of their simplicity; that, as the Irishwoman said, was how the fight began. Whenever I feel that I have caught the national habit and am screaming in imitation of an American eagle, when I feel that my spirit needs chastening and my pride needs chastisement, I consider the American Indian. The story of his destruction is as terrible as the tragedy of Israel. Kecoughtan, the hospitable settlement on the banks of the Hampton River, was attacked by Lieutenant General Gates in 1610 to avenge the death of a colonist. Fourteen of the unsuspecting Indian inhabitants were killed, and Gates saw to it that the survivors abandoned their vil-

lage. This was the punishment inflicted upon the very Indians who had saved the first English settlers from starvation only three years before!

The law of compensation is sometimes enforced, by destiny, by nature or by man. If Chief Pochins' people could have foreseen that a great Indian and Negro college would rise from the ashes of their wigwams, their bitterness might have been less poignant. The white man made restitution in 1868, two hundred and fifty years later, when General Samuel Armstrong established Hampton Institute. We should have left the decorous trolley car to pay our respects to an institution that has given the hand of encouragement and practical aid to over a thousand Indians and to more than eight thousand negroes. We are ashamed of ourselves now for not stopping, since the gate was open and the mere passing through it would have been a simple pilgrimage compared to some that have been made to Hampton from the far ends of America and Africa by Indians and negroes, poor, uneducated and racially at a disadvantage, who have somehow heard that there is help for them there. But we caught only a glimpse of the Institute buildings, buildings which were built and "sung up" by the hands and the plantation voices of the students. We remembered the

Hampton Jubilee Singers, those short and tall, fat and lean, sombre and good-natured darkies who sang beautiful negro songs, camp meeting "revivals" and heart-touching plantation melodies in the summer hotels and boarding-houses of ten years ago. Their sweet singing built Virginia Hall at Hampton Institute just as the songs they sang may some day build the characteristic music of America.

The trolley car passed so many interesting things on the way to Newport News that while I had no desire to swing my feet out of the window, I was tempted to hang my head out, like the Wolf in Little Red Riding Hood, "all the better to *see* with, my dear." The military atmosphere still prevailed, Civil War veterans decorating each street corner and proving by their brisk bearing that you can be a very young fellow at seventy-five. Older people of twenty or forty or thereabouts passed, carrying strings of fish. Indeed the whole atmosphere of Hampton and Phœbus is flavoured, commercially and atmospherically, with fish. The tourist who dines for pleasure and not simply for nourishment can satisfy his fastidious appetite anywhere along the peninsula with porgies and pompano, hogfish, mackerel and delicate butterfish, and if he likes oysters and is enough of a connoisseur

to know the difference between "just an oyster" and a Virginia oyster, he will make loving pilgrimages from restaurant to restaurant to sample the delicious Lynnhaven, the succulent Mobjack Bay, the juicy York River and the tender James River. Nor does he have to consult his calendar before he begins his feasting to make sure that there is a letter "r" tucked away in the name of the month, for he can buy oysters fresh from the oyster beds, shucked at Hampton and as innocuous as morning dew. The crab factories along the water-front are going to be responsible in the dim future for some strange archæological mistakes, since the mounds of discarded crab shells are rising higher and higher, veritable skeleton pyramids which will baffle the future professor into making the absurd statement that the Virginians of the twentieth century lived entirely upon the meat of crabs and built their cities atop the refuse of their feasts.

The puritanical trolley turned aside at Hampton and followed the line of the shore all the way to Newport News, passing rows and rows of suburban cottages built on a geometric plan that makes the neighbourhood about as picturesque and appealing as a concentration camp. We turned away from the hideous procession of *art nouveau* villas and looked out at the smiting blue

of Hampton Roads, as calm and unruffled as if the *Monitor* and *Merrimac* had never blazed away at each other and settled the destiny of a nation on its placid surface. The two prehistoric ironclads met just off Sewall's Point and pursued each other like spitting dragons from their starting place to Old Point Comfort, and then battled furiously all the way back to Newport News again, crowds of people following them along the shore, like English rowing enthusiasts pursuing two racing shells along the banks of the Thames. And at the end, although the *Merrimac* was perhaps technically victorious, the fight was a draw. The *Monitor* won a moral victory for the Union, and the evacuation of Norfolk before McClellan's advancing army soon followed.

At Newport News we tried to break into the Newport News Shipbuilding Company's precincts, finding open hostility and undisguised distrust at the gates. It was Saturday afternoon and the workmen had left the yards, but we explained to the gentleman who acted as sentry for the company that we wanted to "wander about and watch the sun go down." If we had said that we wanted to place a ton of high explosives under the enormous hull of the nearly completed *Mississippi,* he could not have been

more sceptical of our intentions. We had to produce letters from our publisher and the distinguished army officer's introduction, fortunately preserved for just such an emergency, before he would let us in. And he explained, rather peevishly, that he was "tired anyway," for the men had been paid off that day, and one hundred thousand dollars had passed from the money-till of the Newport News Shipbuilding Company into the pockets of its seven thousand employés between noon and a quarter to one o'clock.

"I take it on my own shoulders," the weary person said as he opened the office door and waved us toward the yard, "to let you look at the sunset from these premises. You have strange tastes. If you do any harm, I shall blow out my brains."

"We wore him down," I said triumphantly, as we hurried away.

"Wore him down!" Allan shouted. "Nothing of the sort. He was worn down already."

But I insisted that we had won a triumph over authority, for the great yards were deserted and the prodigious hull of the U. S. S. *Mississippi*, scarlet and magnificent, towered directly over our heads. We had paused to read Hunting-

ton's pledge, written on a bronze tablet at the yard entrance:

"We shall build good ships
At a profit if we can
At a loss if we must
But always good ships."

And the *Mississippi* seems to have been as good as his word, for when she was launched a month later she was a sight to warm the cockles of any shipbuilder's heart. The sun set obligingly just behind her, and we lingered through a long twilight in the deserted yards where the clatter and roar of machinery had given way to a profound silence, where only our small voices echoed faintly, where the swarming labourers' tools had been laid down, as if forever, where the great unfinished ships were caught in a mesh of steel girders and wooden beams, where the furnaces and forges glowed dimly and the high roofs of the machine shops were filling slowly with shadows, where there was a mysterious cessation of violent activity, a hush, as if the building of the world had been delayed and the builders had been called away to some tranquillity, some peace, some rest from the gigantic labour, following the sun down the other side of the globe.

We returned to Norfolk in a swift packet, crossing the wide stretch of tranquil water through a splendid flood of moonlight that filled the bowl of the world with quicksilver. We were alone on deck except for a mysterious and romantic young woman who looked like an F. F. V. and was dressed in rags. Bareheaded, she stood by the rail, looking into the face of the white moon, and she was so pathetically lovely and forlorn that Allan grew preoccupied and sighed like a furnace. I thought of offering her my extra coat, but the impulse died when I saw the haughty tilt of her fine head. One would as soon have thought of offering an undershirt to the Queen of England. We pitied her, Allan for her tattered beauty, I for her proximity to pneumonia, all the way back to Norfolk.

When we got to the Monticello we went to our rooms to wash away the disturbing memory. My laundry, which I had entrusted to the hotel with entreaties written on the list to "return *positively* Saturday night" had kept its promise and was lying on my bed, done up in paper wrappings and packed in a box as if it were priceless raiment laundered by a modern Sans-Gêne.

"Hello!" I called into the next room to Allan.

"Here's the laundry. We can go on to Wilmington to-morrow, if you say."

"Hurrah!" Allan sang, appearing in the door with his hair standing on end and most of his face buried in a towel. "Now I can have a clean shirt. I'll dress for dinner."

I opened the box, and there in mounds of pink tissue I saw what had been my linen and Allan's, mutilated, transformed, stiffened beyond semblance to any earthly thing, blue as a cloudless sky, degraded. The ribbons had become ropes, the lace had taken on the horrible quality of chenille curtains, the buttons were flattened into oblivion. They cracked as I lifted them out—shirtwaists, petticoats, silk shirts, stockings—

"All ruined!" I wailed, suddenly falling in a heap on the bed; "all ruined, and I have so—*little!*"

Allan put his hand on my shoulder and patted sympathetically.

"I'll buy more."

"You *can't*. They're *ruined*. They've been run under a steam roller." I tossed a shower of pink tissue wrappings up in the air. "Tissue paper—string—pins—and four pounds of starch—I could *kill* somebody!"

Allan raised his eyes and I saw a memory in

them. "Suppose you were in rags," he began. "Suppose—"

But I had jumped up and was already powdering my nose. "Heaven save us," I gasped through my tears; "who's complaining?"

CHAPTER IV

ON TO WILMINGTON, A WRECK, AND A LITTLE DISSERTATION ON PULLMAN CARS

WE had breakfast at half-past six with the mistaken intention of being on time for an eight o'clock train to Wilmington. From the dining-room windows of the Monticello, while a sleepy waiter served us coffee 'n rolls, we saw the moon set and the sun rise over Norfolk Harbor. It was all very beautiful and rather an adventure for me for I almost never see a sunrise.

Allan had carefully paid the bill while I was dressing, so there was no excuse to unburden my laundry grievance to the night-clerk. Besides, there was small hope of redress, as I was wearing one of the shirtwaists. I had carefully concealed it under my coat, but its appalling starchiness gave me a pouter pigeon expression. Every time I moved my degraded and transformed lingerie cracked like a pistol shot. So I left the Monticello with black looks, forgetting how much I had liked the coffee, the orchestra and my comfortable bed.

We were ferried over to our train in a barge drawn, or rather nosed ahead, by a tug. The mysterious lady who had puzzled us so the night before crossed with us. She was still bareheaded and wore the thinnest sort of a meagre black jacket which was too long in the waist and too short in the sleeves. And this time she carried a book and a travelling bag, although what on earth she could have put in it baffled me utterly. She sat very quietly while we admired the tilt of her fine head and her really beautiful profile. She seemed to be perfectly indifferent to the stares of the men and the curiosity of the women as if it were the usual thing for young beauties with white hands and threadbare clothes to go about alone, hatless, and staggering under a heavy travelling bag.

"She is either a fanatic, a criminal or an actress," Allan decided after a long stare.

But I thought secretly that she was more probably a young person with "ideas," one of those heroic Joans of modern society who believe in turning the conventions inside out. I knew that if I should ask her why she affected a flutter of rags at the elbows she would answer quietly, "Because I am a free spirit," or some utter rot like that. We can be as eccentric as we like as long as our eccentricity is invisible. It is not

generally understood that the invisible kind of eccentricity is dangerous. No one would think of staring at a sober, unobtrusive passerby whose brain, nicely hidden from public scrutiny, is plotting the overthrow of a government or the assassination of a king. But let us go harmlessly barefoot, or take a naïve fancy to walking backward, and we become objects of suspicion and aversion. The mysterious lady. I felt certain, was neither a criminal, a fanatic or an actress, and she was probably reading "Elsie Dinsmore."

It was still very early when the ferry drew away from Norfolk and, poked by the energetic little tug, edged across the harbour to the wharf where our train was waiting for us. The light was crisp and brilliant; it gilded the breasts and wings of wheeling gulls that followed us, and turned our wake into a churning froth of gold. We crossed the bow of a big, grey naval collier coming down from the Yard at Portsmouth on her way to sea. I don't suppose she is the tallest ship in the world, but she towered over us like a thin-sliced skyscraper, the sun glinting along her sides and rimming the sails and spars with a fiery glitter. How beautiful everything was! Fresh, boisterous, golden morning, the sparkle of the sea and the heady swell of it! Looking

IT WAS STILL VERY EARLY WHEN THE FERRY DREW AWAY FROM NORFOLK

back, we had a last glimpse of Norfolk and the familiar Anheuser-Busch sign which must be such a source of misery and bitter suggestion to the wet voters of Virginia.

The mysterious lady and her travelling bag followed us into our Pullman and aroused the porter to a frenzy of curiosity by looking like a waif and behaving like a languid princess. She read and yawned delicately and read again, with her tattered shoes displayed on a cushion, and the porter was so stunned that he offered her a paper bag for the hat that she didn't have. I thought of bribing him to find out what she was reading, but I was so afraid that it might be Schopenhauer and not "Elsie Dinsmore" that I hesitated too long.

At a small way-station not far from Norfolk she got off, and walked straight into the arms of a good-looking boy who was waiting for her on the station platform. He was dressed for all the world like a ——

"Ah *do* declare!" chortled the porter, who had pressed his nose flatter than ever against the window-pane. "Foh de Lo'd's sake!"

"Movies!" I said.

"Ah do declare," snickered the porter, "he's done dress' up like a cowboy. Jes' foh all de world like one, yessah. Foh de Lo'd's *sake!*"

"Movies," said Allan disgustedly.

Perhaps. But I would rather believe that she had travelled the world over, hatless, to kiss him in the shadow of his sombrero, for it was big enough for two.

After that we edged around the Dismal Swamp for miles. The trees are gaunt and bone-grey as skeletons, but they spread tenaciously at the roots, like giants with their feet spread wide apart, and get a foothold in the shallow water. I had expected to see Spanish moss swinging like witches' hair from the branches, but there was none. Festooned and looping vines hung in tangled confusion, and the dropsical trunks of the pallid trees were grotesque and melancholy, but it was not the lush and tropic forest I had pictured. I could not believe that the Virginia soil was productive, or conceive of the inhabitants being anything but web-footed, if all the rest of the State was like this—an endless chain of puddles and tangled swamps laced with vines and clogged with bush growth.

But there are fourteen millionaire farmers in Norfolk County, Virginia, and farmers can't become millionaires without farms. (Unless they go into munitions—but that, of course, is outside my contention!) The eight o'clock train to Wilmington must make a point of avoiding

the fertile miles of Norfolk County's famous truck-farms. Simply because Tom Moore and Longfellow wrote ballads about the Dismal Swamp, tourists are supposed to hanker for a glimpse of its ashen desolation. I, for one, would have preferred to see the checkerboard landscape where the fruits and vegetables we buy in New York at the early morning market are picked "the day before."

The Virginia farmer has every facility for selling his crops; he has an elaborate network of railways at his disposal and a great port at his very front door. North, South, East and West are open to him and his is the most spectacular market-place in the world. The next time I go to market (I don't go now, for I am raising my own vegetables in the tennis-court), I shall remember the sunny beauty of a Virginian day and perhaps marketing will take on romance from the memory. Who knows, if I am lucky I may buy one of Upton's potatoes! Upton is the Virginian potato king. He supplies the local farmers with fertiliser and seed; he sells the crop and divides the profit. It has been darkly but perhaps not truthfully hinted that by storing the potatoes in his warehouses at Norfolk he has "cornered" the local potato market. At any rate, potatoes are making him rich, and I

could not help feeling chagrined that the value of a potato is higher than the value of a word!

Another Norfolk man, Mr. Thomas Rowland, turned back the rich Virginia soil and discovered an agricultural gold nugget in the humble peanut. He staked out the first claims a long time ago when peanuts were popularly despised as nigger-food. Although the African slaves had for years planted their own peanut fields, no one except Mr. Rowland realised that there was any commercial value in the little "hard-shelled potatoes." Mr. Rowland was a man with a vision, and like most visionaries he was misunderstood. He believed in peanuts and eventually became the little father of the industry. I wonder whether he dreamed of peanut brittle and peanut butter and a thousand and one other peanut delicacies? I wonder whether he foresaw the amazing popularity of the corner peanut stand and heard the chirruping steam whistle, the thin, persistent note which has come to mean "hot-roasted peanuts" all over the world? If you are sentimental about such things, doff your hat to Mr. Rowland! I did not know until I was decidedly grown up that peanuts grow under ground, and it was still more surprising to discover that the vines are cut and stacked around poles for all the world like

miniature copies of those Austrian hay-mounds one sees in Kärnten and sometimes in the Tyrol.

The train to Wilmington ambled along like a Virginia creeper as far as Eura and there it came to a dead stop for an hour. The porter and the conductor disappeared, and save for one other traveller, who was mercifully sound asleep, we were left alone in the Pullman. A drowsy, stupefying calm settled down on us. We read our newspapers because there was nothing to see at Eura except the station hogs, and they had so little regard for their own lives, or so great a faith in our permanence, that they runted under the car wheels. At first we were sustained by the thought that we were waiting on a switch for some thundering express train to pass on its way to Norfolk. When that hope died, I began to wonder whether we hadn't perhaps been "slipped." I remembered the horrible occasion in England when I had fancied that I was going from Liverpool to London and had had the poor luck to be in the Warwick car. The express had roared on and the "slipped" car, unhooked in the great steel comet's full flight, had clicked into the Warwick station all on its own.

"Warwick, madam."

And a leisurely person opened the compartment door and took my bags.

"But I'm on the London Express!"

"I beg your pardon, madam. This is the slip carriage for Warwick."

On the platform I stared wildly about for the rest of the train. A puff of smoke on the horizon showed me where it was.

"Slip carriage—" I began feebly.

"Yes, madam."

"It was, what d'you say, *slipped* on purpose?"

The leisurely person had looked at me with a faint suspicion of pity.

"Oh, you were going to London?" He allowed himself to smile. "It's 'ard, it is that, for foreigners to find their way ab'at. If you spoke English now—it wouldn't 'ave happened."

He picked up the last aitch with care and turned his back on me. . . .

"Have we been slipped?" I asked Allan, when Eura had become a fixture.

The other passenger, who turned out later to be a lumber merchant from Norfolk, woke out of an uncomfortable and crumpled slumber and glanced at his watch.

"It must be a wreck," he said. "There usually is one."

"Usually!"

"Well, nearly always. I'll go out and see."

He had a nice smile and endeared himself to

us at once by using it. "You just watch that razor-back hog stroppin' himself on the fence until I come back," he said.

We waited, while the hog stropped. And sure enough, it was a wreck.

"I hope you brought your lunch," our fellow-traveller said, appearing in the doorway again with his engaging smile in action, "for we are going to be six hours late. There are eight freight cars off the track, all smashed to a tinder, up yonder a mile or so. I don't reckon we'll move on for some time. Would you like to walk ahead and see the wreck?"

Apparently no one could tell us anything more definite. The conductor, whom every one called Captain Clarke or, popularly, "Cap," was sitting on the station steps with his thumbs hooked under his suspenders, his hat on the back of his head and a cheery smile for every one. The engineer was taking a nap on the cow-catcher, the engine puffed slowly with a thin whistle, like a snoring old man, and the Pullman porter was flirting with some very dark ladies in the Jim-Crow car. So we started on foot to see the wreck.

All the inhabitants of Eura, white and black, had decided to do the same thing and the rail-road track looked like a promenade. There

were tall, lanky tar-heels in snuff-coloured jackets and mud-caked shoes, spitting and chewing rhythmically; there were inconceivably ragged negroes, tiny, barefooted pickaninnies with rolling eyes and infectious grins, black women with babies in their arms striding along the tracks with the curiously free gait of the African; there were farmers, hunters, and some solemn white boys in city shoes who had apparently come from Norfolk on our train, and, bringing up the rear, Allan, the lumber merchant and I. We all trudged toward a puff of white smoke a mile and a half away. The air was delicious, full of a delicate, heady pine smell, resinous and fresh, and the sun was so warm where it struck across my shoulders that I had to take off my fur and finally my coat. On both sides of the track a forest of short-leaf pine fringed the top of a low embankment. We were still on the skirts of the Dismal Swamp, a sandy oasis in the endless stretches of water-soaked land between Norfolk and Savannah.

For the first time I saw cotton growing. "Only a po' little bunch," our Pullman acquaintance apologised. But he groped through a wire fence and picked a stalk of the pretty, snowy stuff for me to wear as a bouquet. It was thrilling to see a whole field of cotton, even if

it was a po' little bunch. It was just as moving to come on a field of cotton as it was to come face to face with the Coliseum for the first time. Cotton means the South, the romantic and alluring South, just as the Coliseum means old Rome and bloody gladiators and rows of virgins with their thumbs turned down. It was just as moving to hold a stalk of cotton, dazzling white, between my fingers as it was to find an asphodel in the Campagna. And I shall be sorry if the time ever comes when there is nothing I will not have seen that can make me feel that way!

A broken shoe on the driving wheel, whatever that is, had caused the accident, and as the engineer said, it was *some* smash! He was sitting on the bank near the track, looking shaken and pale and contemplating the wreckage with an almost malicious pleasure. He had been in a wreck, he had saved his skin, and, believe him, it was *some* smash.

"God was kind to the live stock," he said morosely.

And God *had* been kind. The engine had ploughed up three hundred feet of track into a maize of twisted rail and tinder-wood, but it still stood upright, sunken to its knees in sand and wreckage. Right behind it there was a box-car full of live-stock, miraculously right-side up,

too. Behind that the eight smashed cars lay sideways, tipped on end, spilled into the ditch, split open, cracked, splintered and pulverised.

"If you don't call that Providence," the engineer demanded, "what on earth do you call it?"

We went up close to peer between the slats at the huddled cows, the grunting pigs, the stricken, shivering little calves, and tried to reach their soft, moist noses with handfuls of grass. I began to wonder why they had been saved at all since they were on their way to Norfolk to be slaughtered. There is a story, you remember, about a man who was being rushed to the hospital—rushed so fast, in fact, that the ambulance collided with a fire engine. . . .

Providence had been generous. No one was hurt from the engineer and fireman to the smallest, terrified pink and black pig. But the solemn crowds that stood along the track contemplating the spectacular cataclysm would have had a much better time if some one had been obliging enough to break his head. Even mildly exciting human wreckage, a smashed leg or an arm, would have cheered them up. It was too bloodless. Otherwise it was a fine wreck. Vaguely disappointed, armies of small boys pressed

around the engineer and probed for particulars.

"Wa'nt you scairt?"

"Didn't it *bump* awful?"

"Did you git time to put on the brakes?"

The engineer glowered at them. "I told you," he said, "it was a *smash*. I didn't *know* nothin', I just jumped."

One small boy, freckled beyond recognition, bare-footed and wild-eyed, had more imagination than any of us. He offered a sop to our thirst for horrors.

"I guess," he said slowly, "I guess there's plenty of dead men under them cars—all *smashed* to *pieces,* I guess."

We left the crowd still staring and trudged back the long, hot mile and a half to Eura again. Captain Clarke was sitting where we had left him on the station steps, but he had a dinner-plate on his knees, and oh, Lord, how *good* his dinner looked! He waved a fork at us.

"You'd better go over yonder and have dinner—that farmhouse behind the picket fence, just where you see the white hog. They'll give you something, I reckon. We're waiting for the wrecking train. I'll call you when they let us by. Scat now!"

"Can you give us dinner?" we asked at the farmhouse.

And heaven be praised they reckoned they could. We were shown into the parlour to wait until something was "warmed up" for us. It was a parlour out of a story book, and we sat in silence trying to control our expressions. We had not believed that such parlours existed below the Mason-Dixon line. There were rows of pink conch shells on the mantel shelf. There was an organ. And a framed "What is Home Without Mother." Yes, really! And crayon portraits of grandfather and grandmother, grandfather whiskered and grandmother terrified. While we waited a young man with red hair and protruding teeth came in to entertain us. He hoped we were all well and remarked that the mud was unusually bad, even for that time of year. And I noticed, mentally putting my hand over grandfather's whiskers, that in twenty years the red-headed lisper would look exactly like the crayon portrait. A dejected white hound with a ponderous and very plebeian tail sat in the middle of the floor and whacked in a politely bored manner while we discussed the unseasonable mud.

Dinner was served in a long shed behind the house, and you are not obliged to believe me

when I tell you what we had to eat, although it is the gospel truth. We had smothered chicken, roast beef and corned beef, fresh pork and corned pork; we had turnip salad and hot, mashed turnip; we had potatoes and biscuits, soused hog's head, cheese, corn-bread, spoon-bread, pickled peaches, beef stew, preserved fruit, pound cake and chowchow, tea, coffee and milk, beans and bacon. We began in the middle and ate outward. In my eagerness and confusion I put peaches and hog's head on the same plate and sugared my spoon-bread. The chicken was cold and jellied; in time I abandoned the hog's head to sample it, and was then so intrigued by the corned pork that I left everything, even a small beginning in beef stew, for pork and more pork.

"Oh, Lord," I said devoutly, putting down my knife and fork long enough to utter thanks, "give me time to finish!"

But a lanky and terrifically whiskered individual sent at top speed by Cap' Clarke arrived in a breathless condition to warn us that the wreckers had come and that our train was going to "move on up" to the wreck.

Allan rose with a groan, and somewhat impeded by a mouthful of soused hog's head, asked "How much?" of our hostess.

For such a Rabelaisian feast we rather expected to pay dearly. But our prodigal hostess dropped her eyes and explained that fifty cents was what she usually got. We didn't wait to discover whether she considered us usual or unusual guests, but paid her and ran through the ankle-deep mud to our train.

Captain Clarke, with his watch in his hand and one foot on the cow-catcher in an attitude reminiscent of Du Maurier's "Trilby," waited until we had swung aboard (very figuratively speaking), and then, with dramatic wiggle-waggles, signalled to the engineer to "move on up" to the wreck.

With our engine's nose touching the wrecked engine's nose so that they looked for all the world like a pair of friendly dogs, we came to a final halt and were transferred—on foot, of course—to another train which had been sent up from Rockymount for us. Small, wobbly bridges were laid across the most impassable parts of the journey, and train hands were stationed every few yards to see that the exhausted passengers reached the emergency train. And by this time it was hot, hot! Allan and the perspiring porter staggered under two of our suitcases; I manœuvred the third. First I bore it with my left hand; then I set it down, wiped

my brow, and picked it up again with my right hand. Then I stumbled forward, struggling to lift the beastly thing with both hands. And finally when strength had ebbed, I put it on the ground and rolled it before me like a stevedore rolling a barrel. The wrecked train was at least a mile long; it curled like a snake around an almost imperceptible bend in the tracks which the porter assured us was the most dangerous curve between Norfolk and Wilmington.

"We gets wrecked just heah right along," he said.

And when pressed for details, he added nonchalantly, "Oh, most every week," which did not tend to cheer us.

Judging from what I saw of the negroes in the South, they move about like the nomad tribes of Egypt. I cannot imagine how they are able to afford the dubious luxury of Southern travel, for the distances are enormous, and in spite of mileage books, which are supposed to reduce the expense of long journeys, the three-cent miles are ticked off at an alarming speed. When we were planning our trip we spoke of "running over to Tampa from Jacksonville," or, blithely, of "stopping off at Georgetown for a few hours on our way from Wilmington to Charleston." But a day-time journey between any of the

Southern seaports is an all-day journey, and at the end of our tour we found that we had spent exactly twelve days in Pullman cars and a week at sea! Connections were dubious, trains were late, and time and time again we found it impossible to buy parlour-car reservations before actually boarding our train, when we had to wait anxiously until the porter had satisfied himself that there were, or were not, two vacancies. All of the express trains came from the North, "booked through" to the resorts of Southern Florida, and we usually made our entrance into a Pullman already crowded with Northern tourists who had settled themselves, in any chair at all, to play cards, to sleep or to knit. Our arrival always created a feeling of aversion, more or less openly expressed. We felt like social outcasts while the spirited and determined home-towners were being removed, card tables, knitting, fruit baskets, newspapers and all, from chairs not legally their own and deposited in others to make way for us. When a Pullman "sleeper" is made up for the day there is no room for luggage; there are no racks to accommodate it, and it is next to impossible to squeeze a suitcase under the heavily-cushioned chairs. The system makes one long for the European compartment car which is provided with a corridor

where cramped and weary passengers can stretch themselves, and even indulge in a brisk little promenade without having to reel up and down an aisle which is cluttered with travelling bags, fat cushions and an intricate confusion of human legs and feet. I would rather sit up all night than undress behind the revealing curtains of a lower berth, not to speak of attempting the acrobatic contortions necessary to an upper-berth disrobing! Is anything saved by the system except perhaps a surrender to the æsthetic needs of travellers? There is nothing more humiliating than trying to manage hooks and eyes when you are wrapped in a green curtain and tangled in sheets and pillow cases. There is nothing more damnable than washing and combing before a mirror which is coveted by twenty-five other women. Why isn't the compartment night-coach possible in America? We boast of the speed, efficiency, dustlessness and safety of our railroads, but travelling at night in the United States is made a degrading and tortuous experience.

The special train which had come from Rockymount had no Pullman at all. The negroes were herded into one car. We were herded into another to languish in the fetid atmosphere of po' white trash, orange peels, pea-

nut shells and babies. The windows were hermetically sealed and resisted the apoplectic efforts of Allan and the lumber merchant. We had been delayed for five hours, and should have been nearing the end of our journey if Fate, or that dangerous curve, had not arranged that we should travel through North Carolina in the afternoon instead of the morning. As the hot sun slanted lower and lower into the West, it rimmed the endless forests of short-leaf pine with gold and cast long shadows, grotesque and contorted, across the shrub. Now and then the monotony of the pine forests gave way to groves of green trees or to wide fields of cotton, and because I had been taught to recognise the leguminous peanut, I saw whole acres given over to its cultivation.

In Rockymount we were in the centre of a great tobacco-growing country. We were told by a polite but uncertain young man at the station that we could get a train on to Wilmington "somewhere around ten o'clock," so we had supper at the nearest hotel, which lived up to our idea of what a Southern hotel should look like by carrying its portico several stories high and holding it aloft with slender, white pillars. The dining-room was cool and clean and apparently patronised exclusively by fat travelling sales-

men. The young waitresses wore pretty blue linen dresses and seemed possessed of a fierce respectability. The lumber merchant, who was still with us, smiled his engaging smile and described in eloquent Virginian the state of our appetites. If he had been offering to elope with the haughty blue-linen waitress, her scorn and indifference could not have been surpassed. She dropped her eyes, passed one limp, white hand over the amazing smoothness of her pompadour and ignored the jest.

"Will you have your chicken fried," she asked, in a cold voice, "or boiled?"

"Boiled," said the lumber merchant briefly. And his smile died like the sun going behind a cloud.

After dinner we walked through the quiet, well-paved streets of the little city. A white moon sailed high behind fleecy clouds, caught in an enormous hoop of opalescent light. The night was mild and still, with scarcely a flicker of wind to stir the tops of the trees. There is something fascinating about such a transient hour in a strange city. There is a strong sense of unreality in the brief pause among things only half seen, among people whose lives are wholly mysterious. The lighted windows of the houses mean nothing friendly or inviting. The names

of the streets are ciphers. There is no direction, no purpose, no familiarity. You walk through a little world forever alien to you and sniff an atmosphere "between two trains." All I remember of Rockymount is a lighted church before whose open door we paused a moment to watch a minister thundering inaudibly at a patient congregation. And, again, the shadowy outlines of a big tobacco warehouse, where the tobacco leaves are brought to be assorted, graded and labelled, and then sold at auction to buyers from all over the world. With tobacco selling as high as twenty cents a pound, I could imagine some lively bidding under the wide-spreading roofs of those Rockymount warehouses! I remember, too, a broad shopping street inconveniently divided by a network of railroad tracks. And I remember that I began to notice for the first time a broadcast politeness everywhere, soft voices, gentle manners and a bland good humour.

"We must be really in the South," I said to Allan, "for all the men, middle class and upper class, say 'yessir' to each other."

"Yessir," agreed the lumber merchant, "they do!"

And while we all laughed, we had to agree that Southern manners are as good as they are

famous. Everywhere we met gentle, courteous people. No one ever seemed to be in too great a hurry to answer our questions or to set us on the right path when our tourist feet had sadly gone astray, or to give us helpful advice. If the Mason-Dixon line has not been wholly erased, it is not likely that North and South will ever again trip over it. Our differences have resolved into family spats—in the vital issues we will stand together. England and America have been quarrelling for years over the proper, decent and civilised way to eat eggs. England took a stand and said, "Eggs shall be eaten in the shell." America, hurt to the quick, took a stand and said, "Eggs shall be eaten in a cup." For years the resentment alternately smouldered and flared. And now we have witnessed the miracle of Americans eating eggs in the shell and Englishmen scraping eggs out of a cup. Allies! Hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder, eggs any way you say, brother! So it goes. . . . Hate dies more easily than love and it is hard to remember an old pain. Wherever we went in the South the moving-picture theatres were showing the most incendiary and poignant Civil War story that has ever been told—"The Birth of a Nation." Posters of Grant and Lee clasping hands were displayed everywhere; the Ku-

Klux Klan thundered across every signboard; all the bitterness and tragedy of the Reconstruction was enacted night after night in the flickering darkness of the Cinemas to crowded houses. It seems that we have become dispassionate, and that hate and rancour have been buried with another generation. Only the Southerner says, very apologetically, "Allies! You may eat fried chicken and hominy. But please excuse *me,* brother, from pork and beans!"

The lumber merchant escorted us to our train where we had a joyous reunion with Captain Clarke, who was finishing out his run to Wilmington on a special train run either for our benefit or else for the purely mathematical purpose of meeting Captain Clarke's professional schedule. For we were the only passengers. And at four in the morning, just as the first faint blueness of dawn was pulsing in the east, we staggered into Wilmington and startled the sleeping night clerk of the Orton Hotel by pounding on the front door. It hardly seemed worth while to go to bed, but we went with enthusiasm, drawing the shades to shut out the deepening light and falling to sleep before our soot-grimed cheeks touched the pillows.

I woke with a terrifying sense of unfamiliarity. Which was the door and which was the

window? Was it moonlight or sunlight that fell in a dazzling band across my eyes? I sat bolt upright, and shrieked in a panic, "Allan! What's this?"

"What's what?" came his reassuring voice from the next room.

"This place?"

"Wilmington." A pause, then a long sigh. "Isn't it?"

"North Carolina?"

"I reckon so."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, *you're* not going to cultivate a Southern accent, are you?" I wailed, and fell flat on my pillows again.

Suddenly there was a terrific shout. Allan appeared in the doorway, wrapped in bedclothes like the ghost in "Hamlet" and brandishing his watch with violent and hysterical gestures. "Do you know what *time* it is?" he roared.

"No," I said, in a thin, small voice.

"It's three o'clock!"

"Morning or afternoon?"

"Three o'clock," he repeated, biting off each word with the intensity of a Booth-Barrett tragedian, "in the afternoon."

I tried to brush the offending streak of sunlight out of my eyes. "Wilmington, North Carolina," I said dreamily, "three o'clock in the aft-

ernoon. . . . Telephone down to the office and ask them to send breakfast up—at once."

"And when," Allan asked in a tragic voice, "do you expect to have dinner?"

CHAPTER V

PALMS AND SPANISH MOSS AT LAST, AND WE MAKE OUR BOW TO ARISTOCRATIC MADAME CHARLESTON

WE were undoubtedly in the South at last for the air was mild and the sun, when it shone at all, was deliciously warm. We knew we were in the South because we saw palms growing out of doors—not the potted variety so popular at weddings, funerals and Tammany Hall receptions, but tall, crisp palms actually thriving in the open air in mid-winter. It filled us with delight when we realised that we had at last attained a climate where palms *would* grow out of doors, yet with characteristic impatience we were not content to witness one miracle but demanded another.

Was there any Spanish moss in Wilmington? We stopped at the first drugstore and asked the burning question of a startled clerk who expected a demand for bicarbonate of soda or cold cream and had to pull himself together before

he could answer. Spanish moss? Well, he reckoned so—had we tried Greenfield Park?

We had not. The clerk followed us to the door and explained the trolley system of Wilmington in detail, confusing us to such an extent that we decided to walk to Greenfield Park. Alas! for our over-zealous enthusiasm! The road was thick with white dust and led us through Wilmington and into its forlorn and dismal suburbs. We had heard, to quote a proud citizen of Wilmington, that "no buzzard had set foot in the city for over three years," and although we did not know whether the black scavengers had a tacit understanding with the city authorities, it is perfectly true that the only buzzards we saw lingered morosely in the suburbs. We admired the big birds for their leisurely manners and for the upward tilt of their wide wings. Like darkies, they seemed to enjoy warm, sunny places, long hours of sleepy contemplation and 'most anything to eat.

Greenfield proved to be an ungarnished wilderness of pines and live oaks, the summer paradise of merry-making Wilmington. The pavilions and the restaurants were closed and the piers and bath-houses that fringe the lake were deserted. But there *was* moss—lots and lots of it—hanging in bedraggled festoons from the

LONG HOURS OF SLEEPY CONTEMPLATION

branches of a row of decaying trees that rose out of the centre of the lake like drenched skeletons. We stood on the shore and contemplated the spectacle as we would have stared for the first time at the pyramids of Egypt. Allan strove for enthusiasm, but his voice was hollow. He said that the ghostly trees, the ashen, pendant moss, the dull blackness of the water, reminded him of the fantastic illustrations of Dulac and Kay Nielsen. But I knew that Spanish moss had been a terrible disappointment, for he made no move to open his pochade box or to settle down on the water's edge for an hour of enthusiastic work.

We were very polite to each other as we skirted the lake, avoiding any mention of Spanish moss as if we had created an egregious social error in not liking it. It was as if we had come face to face with a source of universal enthusiasm, like the Sphinx, and had felt no emotion at all. We avoided the issue by striking up a conversation with a small boy who had been fishing in the lake and was tying his boat with vicious jerks to one of the tumble-down recreation piers.

"Any fish in the lake?" we asked.

"Yep. Bass."

"Any luck to-day?"

The small boy scowled. "Nope. Caught one, but he slipped through a crack in the boat."

"Oh! Is it nice here in summer?"

"Yep. There's a band."

You must admit that we were rather pathetic about it. We followed the small fisherman as far as the edge of the park, and when he turned aside there, we boarded a convenient trolley car because we were afraid to be left alone. It was an absorbing trolley car and occupied our whole attention because the motorman "doubled his rôle" and took the conductor's part, dashing from the front of the car to the rear and displaying such feverish energy that we wondered whether he drew double pay, like a protean actor, for the feat.

But such speculation could not forever put off the question of Spanish moss. Back in Wilmington again, the truth came out. "I don't like it," I whispered to Allan. "Do I dare say so in the book?"

Allan confessed that he would as soon slander his great grandmother as to blacken the reputation of Spanish moss. "It is the mainstay of the Southern landscape," he said, "the prop, the keystone." And he added solemnly, "They won't read another page."

But you will, won't you, if I declare myself

here and now a profound lover of other Southern specialties—golden jessamine and roses, honeysuckle, fragrant box hedges, nightingales and mocking birds, plantation voices, good manners and beautiful architecture? These things are not fallacies south of the Mason-Dixon line, they are adorable realities. Only I cannot write myself down, being a sort of feminine George Washington when it comes to my likes and dislikes, as an open-mouthed worshipper of an ashen, destructive parasite which destroys beautiful trees and, if given a good start, thinks so little of its environment that it will grow, and flourish, on a telegraph wire! Spanish moss takes its being and its sustenance from the air, like slander and evil, and thrives, like slander and evil, on the death of something beautiful. I would tear its thick webs down from the gnarled branches of the beautiful oaks and give the trees life again, nor would I shed a tear for the over-advertised parasite, since I have shed them all for its victims.

Wilmington is so far from the sea that it might never have been a port at all if a wide stretch of water had not decided to enter the land by way of Cape Fear, bringing commerce to Wilmington to-day just as it brought pirates and privateers a hundred years ago. The pirates

have long since been sent where pirates ought to go, but commerce still comes to Wilmington in spite of the fact that the city's chief import has no way of getting out of war-locked Germany. Two of the last German ships to bring fertiliser chemicals to Wilmington are interned in the harbour to-day, a striking proof that Britannia still rules the waves. Chile supplies the deficit and Wilmington, undeterred by war, sends ship after ship loaded with cotton down through Cape Fear to the sea.

Cape Fear's dark history attracted us and all through one merry morning we went in pursuit of it, going from bookstore to bookstore only to be met with polite regrets and the assurance that if we could "get hold" of Mr. James Sprunk we could learn all there is to know about Cape Fear. Mr. Sprunk had written a book called "Cape Fear Legends," stories of buccaneers and ghosts and pleasant adventurers, and while no one in Wilmington possessed a copy every one had heard of Mr. Sprunk's knowledge of the North Carolina legends. We finally went to Mr. Sprunk's office, lured by the growing fame of his book, and made our embarrassed plea to a positive clerk who told us that Mr. Sprunk was "in conference" and would we please write down our reasons for calling. He thrust a pad of

paper and a pencil through his wicker cage and we fled, feeling that by no possible stretch of newsgatherer's impudence could we send word to Mr. Sprunk "in conference" that we wanted to read his "Cape Fear Legends." We went back to the Orton Hotel, and after a conference of our own decided upon the cowardly expedient of calling Mr. Sprunk on the telephone. In a thin, small voice I gave the number to the Wilmington exchange while Allan hovered in the background with one hand on the door-knob ready for flight.

"Hello!"

The die was cast. "Is this Mr. Sprunk?" said I.

"No, this is Mr. Sprunk's secretary. Mr. Sprunk is in conference——"

"Good Lord," I whispered hoarsely to Allan, "he is still——"

"I beg your pardon? Who *is* this, please?"

I confessed in a panic, "Miss Cram," and halted miserably. Allan opened the door and balanced on the threshold.

"Miss Cram?"

"Yes—I, well, you see, I want to find out something about the Cape Fear legends—pirates, Indians and all that sort of thing."

The voice at the other end of the 'phone grew

querulous. "I can't hear a word you say. Louder, please!"

Louder, please!

"Here," I shrieked at Allan, *"you* explain ——"

But he was gone, calling over his shoulder as he ran, "Ring off, you fool!"

I rang off, unable to bear the spluttering and justifiable rage that burned the wires across Wilmington. I went down stairs, still blushing hotly to the rim of my hat, and found Allan in cozy conversation with the hotel clerk. "Here's a man who can help us," Allan shouted, as if jaunty nonchalance could efface the memory of his cowardice. "Mr. Gregson here says to call on the *Star.*"

"Mr. Gregson here" did not intend to be politely sardonic for it was not his intention to insinuate that we had hitched our wagon to a comet. Like every one else in the South he was kind to tourists in distress, and he meant the morning newspaper when he advised our calling on the *Star*. The *Star* was at home and received us, in the genial person of Mr. Claussen, in the editorial rooms in an atmosphere endearingly familiar to me of proof-sheets and ink, clippings, glue, encyclopædias and waste-paper baskets. Mr. Claussen is an enthusiastic believer in the

new South, the inventor of its commercial slogan, and one of its most brilliant editors. He would not tell us about Cape Fear. "You must see Mr. Sprunk for that," he said, and our hearts dropped into our boots. But he did tell us about North Carolina in the "Indian days," when the Cherokee and Tacawbe nations were still to be reckoned with as enemies of the white planter. The early settlers were repeatedly massacred by the Indians, the white women were carried away by them and there was more than one instance of "lost settlements" when whole groups of colonists disappeared mysteriously and were never seen or heard of again. South Carolina suffered the same fate, for the Yemasses were encouraged by the Spaniards of St. Augustine to attack the English at Charleston and the Tuscaroras were implacable enemies. Mrs. Ravenel in her delightful book, "Charleston, the Place and the People," says that "on the family tree of the Bulls, opposite the name of John, youngest son of the emigrant Stephen, stands 'first wife carried off by Indians 1715.' They lived at Bulls near Coosaw Island, just above St. Helena, and were in the very track of the storm. He, too, became an 'Indian fighter.' Another woman, Mrs. Burrows, was taken by a 'scalping party' and carried with her child to St. Augustine. The child

cried and was instantly killed, and she was ordered, under pain of death, not to weep for him! After being kept a prisoner for several years, she was allowed to return to Charleston, where she told the governor that the 'Huspah King' who had captured her had told her that his orders from Spain were to kill every white man and bring every negro alive to St. Augustine and that rewards were given for such services."

So were the Indians made the dupes of unscrupulous white men and so were the harassed colonists tried sorely in their efforts to settle the wilderness of America. To-day the Cherokees and Tacawbes of North Carolina are practically extinct; a few of them live on reservations in the interior of the State, a broken and dying remnant of a great people. It will not be long before all memory of them will be lost forever, and like the mysterious Etruscans of Italy only their burial mounds and broken fragments of beautiful pottery, arrow heads, primitive battle axes and agricultural implements will tell the story of their amazing and brief existence. Mr. Claussen told us that when he was a boy the Indians picked cotton on his father's plantation, doing that menial work on the site of an ancient Indian battlefield where every turn of the

plough unearthed some trophy of their heroic past. The Indians despised the negroes and the negroes were horribly afraid of the redmen, but the simple and anything but belligerent slaves gradually outnumbered the warriors, winning a racial victory that may have simplified a great many things for the white man. An equal ratio of increase might have presented some embarrassing problems.

To-day the negroes of Wilmington rest secure in their victory and the proud and lonely Tacawbe who occasionally comes to town must wonder at the obscure methods of destiny. All along the waterfront the conquerors sit in somnolent groups, swinging their feet over the water, their shoulders hunched, their battered hats over their eyes, watching a fish-hook attached to a piece of twine and lowered more as an excuse for sitting still than as a lure for passing fish. The sun beats down on them, the sky is blue over them and the lazy days are made for much song, much sleep and a little work.

Mr. Claussen remembered a story, popularly believed in Wilmington, of President Wilson's boyhood, and it is worth repeating, I think, to prove my theory that great men must be aware of their destiny while they are still in knickerbockers. The Cherry Tree incident could only

have been arranged with one eye on future generations of hero-worshipping little liars. Lincoln and the sum in arithmetic on a shingle could only have been an inspired forethought. Wilson's story is not generally known, but it is a classic and deserves to be taught in our public schools. The future coiner of "Too proud to fight" set the scene for his infant prodigiousness, if I may put it that way, at the old swimming-hole in Wilmington. The town bullies, all bigger and stronger than the young Wilson, had set upon a little pickaninny. They were pelting their victim with sharp stones when the future president made his entrance. Peace without victory did not enter the prodigy's mind; he attacked all of the bullies at once, vanquished them and then, with his arm around the rescued pickaninny, delivered his first ultimatum to a ruthless enemy. "Never," said he, in a clear voice calculated to ring through the ages, "never hit a feller when he's down."

The story is true because the little pickaninny grew up the proud possessor of a scar and a long memory. When Wilson fulfilled his essential destiny and entered the White House, he received a letter from the co-protagonist of his first public appearance. He answered it, and there is one glorified black man in Wilmington

CHARLESTON IS CAUGHT INTO A DREAM OF THE ROMANTIC PAST

to-day who boasts of having in his possession a personal letter from the President of the United States.

We were so charmed by the tale that we forgot for the moment our pursuit of Mr. Sprunk and his Cape Fear legends. The Cape Fear River used to be the stronghold of those roving, free-living and free-spending gentlemen of the skull and crossbones. They made Cape Fear and its convenient shelter a hiding place whence they swooped down on merchantmen from the North and South, and rid as many Spanish galleons as possible of their rich cargoes. We felt that Mr. Sprunk had some valuable material for his book because trans-Atlantic travel was as ticklish a business in the eighteenth century as it is in the enlightened present, and Cape Fear was infested, not with U-boats, but with pirates. An amazing number of ships were captured along the coast, nor were matters improved by king's pardons and the glamour of romance. Even gentlemen took to piracy and called themselves illicit traders, which fooled no one. The most appealing of those fashionable adventurers was Stede Bonnet, who had been a major in the army and a man of wealth and position. He abandoned society for life under the Jolly Roger, not an impossible transfer when one considers the

nature of the society. His destiny is interwoven with that of Wilmington, for he was captured at the mouth of the Cape Fear River by Colonel Rhett, who came up from Charleston with two sloops and bagged the fastidious pirate in his den.

Bonnet escaped from Charleston in women's clothes and led the English a merry chase before he was recaptured and finally hanged by the neck and buried (we hope for good) where the Battery gardens are to-day. Mrs. Ravenel says that Bonnet, who was a sort of pirate Raffles, plead for his own life with elegance and piety, and that Chief Justice Trott, who tried him by an old statute of Henry VIII, answered with exalted sarcasm: "You being a Gentleman and a Man of letters I believe it will be needless for me to explain to you the nature of Repentance and faith in Christ. Considering the course of your life and actions I have reason to fear that the principles of Religion that have been instilled into you by your *Education* have been at least corrupted if not entirely defaced by the *scepticism* and *infidelity* of this wicked Age."

So there were eloquent criminals, impressionable juries, bitter prosecuting attorneys and a conviction of the wickedness of the age even

then! Is it possible that the same things will exist two hundred years from *now?*

We hurried on to Charleston because we knew that we would never "get hold" of Mr. Sprunk and that while there was some slight comfort in being shown around the cotton warehouses and the fertiliser plants, nothing but "Cape Fear Legends" could fill the gaping void in our visit to Wilmington. While we were paying our bill at the Orton Hotel, nice Mr. Gregson, who was in a civic panic (if there is such a thing) over our abrupt departure, had a sudden inspiration and declared that the Captain of the Cape Fear steamer was just bound to have a copy. We brightened. Where was the Captain? He would be back in the morning . . . would we wait?

We shook our heads sadly and departed, unable to bear another disappointment. And as if depressed by our failure, the country between Wilmington and Charleston was inconceivably desolate and forlorn. I held my little notebook open and a pencil poised just over the clean and inviting page, hoping to find something delectable to write about. But the untidy landscape spun out behind us in an endless procession of dried tobacco fields, withered rows of shabby cotton, dirty villages, mud, swamps and sand.

But Charleston was true to herself and saw to it that our welcome wiped out the memory of the noteless trip. It was dark when we arrived and the little open carriage that took us from the station to the Charleston Hotel seemed to us to rattle and clop through a cobbled city of dreams. A pale moon, widely hooped and courted by a whole heavenful of languid stars, lighted the way, for Charleston is so much a city of the past and of the old world that she still permits you to see the moon and does not attempt to dazzle your eyes with garish street lamps and electric signs. The coloured driver clucked softly to his leisurely horse, and although it was late and we were tired and hungry we could have jogged on indefinitely, for the air was spicy with box, the aromatic dust of old walls and the tempered saltiness of the distant sea, and we caught glimpses of tangled gardens and wrought iron fences, pillared houses glowing whitely in the moonlight, exquisite doorways, churches and open squares and cobbled streets, narrow alleys that turned abruptly aside and led the pursuing fancy into mysterious shadows. We sensed antiquity all about us, the rare charm of historic ground, for Charleston is like a beautiful house that has been lived in for countless generations, taking on a rare and very

personal quality, a patina, an inimitable lustre. Charleston's charm is two-thirds atmospheric and one-third physical. It is as bewitchingly aristocratic as Bath, a most Bourbon city, exclusive, experienced and very simple as all true aristocrats are. There is a wistfulness about Charleston that is very appealing; like a delightful old châtelaine who has lived richly, suffered much and loved dearly, Charleston has become fragile and delicate, infinitely tender and most rarely sweet.

To understand the peculiar charm of Charleston as it is to-day one must consider the infinite variety of people that went into the making of the modern Carolinian. Virginia was settled by adventurous Cavaliers, Maryland was first established by the Catholics who followed Lord Baltimore, Pennsylvania fell to the Quakers and New England to the Puritans. But Charleston was laid upon a heterogeneous racial foundation and held together by English governors and administrators. Dissenters from Scotland, England and Ireland mingled with English churchmen, and there were a certain number of Dutch, Swiss, Belgians and Quakers besides the Huguenots, who came, four hundred and fifty strong, between 1680 and 1688. The aristocracy which grew out of this astounding

assortment of peoples was an aristocracy of planters and merchants. Rice was the chief product of the Carolinas until 1865, and Mrs. Ravenel says that its planters were the "dominant class of Charleston, socially and politically." The country gentleman was at his best in Carolina; he was a man of breeding, education and wealth; he lived on great plantations in the centre of vast-spreading rice fields, he was a slave owner, his children were educated abroad, and while his life was never lazy or exaggeratedly luxurious, he lived well, with a certain amount of state and formality. As time passed and the first hardships of settling the new colony lessened, life in Charleston patterned itself more and more after that of England. A city of beautiful houses took the place of the first primitive settlement, a very individual and successful architecture appeared, gardens were laid out and such luxuries as silver, pewter, jewelry, fine furniture, laces, satins, mirrors, china and rare wines were imported from Europe. There were horse races, theatres, dinners and balls for the amusement of the upper classes. The races took place at the New Market course not far from the city, and while the fashionable planter and his family went in great style, countrymen of the "cracker" type from the District and all

of the slaves thronged to the race, too, on foot or in primitive carts and wagons.

Dinners, balls and receptions, under the aristocratic administration of the English governors, were formal and probably a very good imitation of English functions. The planter did not want the mother-country to look down her critical nose at him, but of course she did. The snug little island was as contemptuous of her provinces then as she is to-day—or, rather, as she was until recently. The world war brought Canada and Australia and New Zealand very close to snobbish England's heart and she may no longer ignore them. But when Charleston was an English colony she suffered under the criticisms of her Lords Proprietors. When James Glenn came out from England to be governor of the province he wrote back to the Lords of Trade that he could not help expressing his surprise and concern to find that there were "annually imported into this Province considerable quantities of Fine Flanders lace, the Finest Dutch Linens and French Cambricks, Chintz, Hyson Tea and other East India Goods, Silks, Gold and Silver Laces, etc." "The quantity is too great," he wrote, "and the quality too fine and ill calculated for the circumstances of an Infant Colony."

But the planters and merchants of Charleston were not rebuked to the extent of putting aside their harmless little luxuries. Dinners were served by negro servants at long tables spread with fine linen and set with rare china and cut glass. Dances were given in the large drawing rooms; the floors were polished like mirrors, the crystal chandeliers glittered and blinked like fairy cobwebs and candles flickered in the sconces on the walls. It must have been far lovelier than anything we can do nowadays in the way of dinners and dances, in spite of electric lights and tango orchestras and exhaustless débutantes, all arms and tulle, giving their fragile lives to gaiety! The most expensive modern caterers could scarcely equal the dishes concocted by the negro cooks of the period, who brought West Indian recipes from the Islands and laid the foundations for the fame of Southern cooking—turtle and fresh-water terrapin, rice and chicken, soups and fish, all sorts of sweets and cakes to be eaten with Madeira wine and punch and thin glasses of port!

But life was not made up of pretty pleasures. The Carolinian planter had to manage his estates, discipline and guide his slaves, attend to the manifold details of a large establishment—the crops, the stables, the negro quarters—and

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH PORTAL OF ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH

be father, judge, confessor and farmer all in one. He had, besides, to cope with the Indians, with the dangers and difficulties of the Revolutionary War, with epidemic sicknesses and with the elements. Charleston seems to be in the path of cyclones and hurricanes and to lie within the earthquake zone, for time and time again the city has been blown to smithereens and rocked to its foundations and burned to the ground. There could have been no lack of excitement in the Carolinian planter's life!

The last earthquake, which took place an uncomfortably short time ago, in 1886, drove the sixty thousand inhabitants of the city out of their houses and was only prevented from destroying everything by some trick of an obscure and unstable Providence. Walls were strained and cracked to the breaking point but still stood upright; roofs sagged, towers leaned precariously, chimneys toppled over—but Charleston was saved. And those of us who care more for architecture than for anything which comes out of the brain and the heart of man, ought to stand at the corner of Meeting and Broad Streets and cheer three times—once for the merciful earthquake, once for Charleston and once for St. Michael's Church, miraculously spared for our delectation.

When the earthquake "happened" (one wouldn't say "quaked," would one?) Charleston was already unnerved by the cyclone of the year before which had unroofed houses, destroyed the water-front and flooded the whole city. The earthquake came "with a terrible roar, like an express train thundering through a valley," and for a few minutes Charleston reeled drunkenly. The negroes thought that the end of the world had come and rushed into the churches, the worst possible place for them, to shriek and pray. The tower of St. Michael's sank twenty inches, the whole foundation of the beautiful structure dropping fearfully as the earth shifted beneath it. And while its tilting is not as evident as that of the Garisenda and Asinella of Bologna, it is still quite visible from the street. We stood beneath it and lifted our hats (this is quite figurative, of course) for having preserved its balance so long.

Christopher Wren had his hand in the building of St. Michael's. The steeple is as surely Sir Christopher's as the tower of the old church at York Harbor in Maine. Like St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, the church has a pillared portico and the splendid steeple shoots above it, dazzling white like a tall lily, visible for miles and dominating Charleston as surely as Giotto's tower

dominates Florence. During the Civil War the Northerners fired at it from Morris Island, throwing shell after shell at the steeple with such poor marksmanship that no damage was done at all except to the body of the church. I should like to believe that the guardian saint of beautiful architecture, so conspicuously absent at Rheims, directed the fire of the Federals on that occasion.

We went to the vestry door and asked to be admitted, making our first pilgrimage in Charleston, as one always does, to St. Michael's. The vestryman admitted us with enthusiasm, but let us out again with reluctance. We learned from him that George Washington occupied one of the well-worn chairs in the Governor's pew, and that the present organist of St. Michael's is a direct descendant, six generations removed, of the man who installed the organ in the church. Possessed of that information, we moved toward the vestry door again followed by a little knot of New England tourists who had caught the same pearls of wisdom as they dropped from the vestryman's lips. But the vestry door was securely locked and it stayed locked while the canny vestryman sought to dispose of guide books and post cards. There is nothing more antagonistic than being "held up" in the

name of charity. Fifty cents for a guide book of Charleston was little enough, but we set our lips, closed our hands tightly on our purses and resisted pressure. We all blushed, not out of shame for our own penuriousness but for the persistence of the vestryman. One of the New England tourists rattled the door, another turned her back and awaited release in stolid silence. And to the bitter end, when the infuriated vestryman produced the key and let us out again, there was not a single clink of silver coins. I am possibly prejudiced but I think the Italian *custode's* method more artless; he blesses you and your grandmother, mentions the weather, smiles and holds out his hand. . . .

We paused at John Rutledge's grave in the churchyard, wishing that we could have broken his quiet sleep long enough to thank him for having brought Charleston through the dangerous period of the break with England and for having steered the cockleshell Ship of State to safety while all of Charleston was divided between Whigs and Tories. The "shot heard 'round the world" was indeed heard at Charleston, although the Carolinians might still have made peace with tax-mad England if England had listened to reason. The crisis, like all great national crises, produced men who were equal

to the emergency—Francis Marion, Moultrie, Jasper, Haynes, Laurens, Rutledge—heroic names, all of them! Rutledge kept the torch of liberty burning at home while "Marion's men" harassed the British troops, lying in ambush in the swamps and forests, kept alive by the gifts of the devoted Whigs, subsisting on little or nothing at all and, under the inspired leadership of the fiery Huguenot, sweeping down on the unsuspecting English for fierce and generally victorious encounters and then disappearing again into the wilderness.

If Pitt could have plead the colony's cause a little longer, the overseas empire might not have been disintegrated. Certainly South Carolina would have waited longer to make the break. But Pitt was dead and England had so far forgotten his warnings that an English cannon ball struck the statue of the statesman that grateful Charleson had set up in the centre of the town and carried away one of the arms. To-day, the humiliated Pitt, like a male Venus de Milo, decorates Washington Square. The baroque statue has a nice air of antiquity, but Pitt is wrapped in draperies and looks as if he had just jumped out of bed, tangled in sheets and quilts. His eloquent gestures have dislocated his right

arm and he trips on his entangling bedclothes like a wild-eyed somnambulist.

Charleston is open to attack to-day as it was during the Revolution. Standing on the Battery and looking out between Fort Moultrie, on Sullivan's Island, and Fort Sumter to the open sea, we shuddered to think of the fate of the city in case of a bombardment by enemy ships. The two forts face each other across a narrow strip of water, and it must have been exciting work for the Federals and Confederates when they hurled shot and shell at each other for forty hours. The first battle of the Civil War was won by the Confederate garrison of Fort Moultrie, but the fiery Secessionists did not for long have the upper hand. Charleston was bombarded by the Northern army for five hundred and eighty-six days, suffering a martyrdom as severe as that of the cities of Northern France. The people moved back from the water-front or lived in cellars or took chances in the unprotected streets, growing as careless as the sorely tried French under fire. It is a miracle that any of the public buildings and residences of the city escaped, but they did. Charleston rose out of the ruin and desolation, out of the humiliation of defeat, the anguish of the Reconstruction, political corruption, financial collapse and social

disintegration. The city to-day is slightly wistful, serene and extraordinarily proud. Owen Wister painted a perfect picture of the exclusive society of modern Charleston in "Lady Baltimore." He opened the stately doors of the old houses along the Battery and took us into the panelled drawing rooms so fragrant with the delicate aroma of the past; he permitted us to see behind the veil so jealously drawn across that unique little world of aristocrats.

Charleston belongs to the past and will until the last house crumbles to dust and the last proud Tory is laid to rest in the churchyard of St. Philip's or St. Michael's. Charleston is perhaps the only city in America that has slammed its front door in Progress's face and resisted the modern with fiery determination. There are no skyscrapers, no blighting factory chimneys, no glaring electric signs. Even the street cars proceed decorously, and one-horse cabs are more popular than taxis. Society stays behind closed doors or ventures out in state to ride or drive, and there is no preponderance of cheap and noisy po' white trash in the streets. Everything is leisurely and sleepy and mysteriously reminiscent. One hears the soft chatter of the ambling, ragged blacks, the twitter of birds, the clop of a lazy horse. Charleston is caught into

a dream of the romantic past. She sits quietly in her panelled drawing room, surrounded by beautiful things, and listens to dead voices with a beating heart.

For Charleston is the personification of the most fugitive and intangible thing in the world. Charleston is a work of art. Like San Gimignano and Siena, Rothenburg and Mont St. Michel, it belongs in its entirety to a vanished past. It is a "museum piece" among cities, and there should be a wicket gate at the railroad station and a guard to warn you not "to touch, break or otherwise deface" the masterpiece. We hurried through the streets, whispering instinctively.

In New England one comes upon Colonial architecture sandwiched in between Early and Late Victorian jigsaw atrocities. A gabled roof is often dwarfed by a showy Mansard, a fine brick chimney is spoiled by its field-stone neighbour, a fan doorway is lost in a wilderness of plate glass and walnut portals. But in Charleston the pursuit of beauty is simplified. Fine old buildings are displayed side by side, and one has only to advance crab fashion along the streets with Mrs. Ravenel's book in one hand and a map of the city in the other, to see the distinctive architecture of South Carolina at its

best and (to be Irish), at its anything but bad worst!

"Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!" we sang at every turning. And our song was like a fugue, or a litany, for one "beautiful" tripped on the heels of the other wherever we went.

I can always find something to say about things I don't like, but face to face with perfection, I am mute. I have stood in the gardens of the convent of the Blue Nuns at Fiesole and, gazing down across the olives and cypresses at Florence set like a jewel in the burnished shield of the Val d' Arno, I have said "Beautiful" and nothing more. Yet I have been comforted by just such speechlessness in really eloquent souls. Kipling looked down from Fiesole at the same miracle and while I gaped at him, expecting a torrent of superlatives—"Beautiful," he said! So I am in good company, like the cur that trotted under the king's carriage.

"Beautiful," I said before the old Market at Charleston. It is set upon a deep basement like a Roman temple; a double flight of steps leads to the portico and a simple cornice is thrust aloft by four columns. There are many other examples of this domesticated classicism in the city—the Charleston Hotel, the Custom House, Gabriel Manigault's City Hall, the Pringle

House in King Street, the beautiful south portal of St. Philip's Church and Charleston College. The severity of the pillared porticoes is relieved by delicate wrought iron railings, and the glaring whiteness of the columns has been tempered by wind and rain and sun. Age, which is so unbecoming to people, has made Charleston a place of rare beauty. Heaven grant that the City Fathers will never attempt to paint the faded walls, repair the peeling stucco and the rusted railings and weed the gardens! Only new cities need be kept in spick-and-span condition. Charleston, like an old civilisation, has won the right to be careless. St. Paul, on the other hand, has not! For cities are like people—only dukes know how to wear weather-beaten tweeds, only queens dare combine dowdy bonnets and diamonds, only kings are regal in grey derbies and fawn-coloured cutaways, and only very old cities can afford to let grass grow in their streets and to torment the soles (and the souls) of their citizens with cobble-stones.

Mr. Howells had put a literary bee in our bonnets and had set us in fevered pursuit of gates. And since Charleston is a city of gates we could not see them all. The famous brick gates of General William Washington's house on the Battery were easy to identify and we

THE SEVERITY OF THE PILLARED PORTICO IS RELIEVED BY DELICATE WROUGHT IRON RAILINGS

paused many times to peer through the Simonton gateway in Legaré Street with its wrought iron lantern and the long walk beyond thickly shadowed by a compact arch of trees. But the amazingly delicate and graceful gates of St. Michael's and St. Philip's held us longest.

Calhoun is buried in the churchyard of St. Philip's. Like Pitt, he died too soon for America's good. We came upon his simple tomb in the western churchyard after we had vainly searched for it nearer St. Philip's. I have avoided graveyards scrupulously since Edgar Lee Masters discovered that every epitaph conceals a tragedy. I used to believe all the glowing tributes and heartbreaking laments, and thought that every crumbling, moss-grown slab concealed an angel until Mr. Masters happened along and unearthed the corruption beneath my feet. If Gray had read the "Spoon River Anthology," could he have written the "Elegy"? I wonder!

I had no sooner set foot in St. Philip's churchyard than I stumbled on a tragedy, a grim little tragedy! I give it to you for elaboration:

"Died the 22nd of August 1799
Joseph Jones of Milford
State of Massachusetts

In the 62nd year of his Age
After three Days of an
Epidemic Sickness."

Alas, that poets should open our eyes to such realism! We hurried out of the picturesque churchyard and forgot Joseph Jones' three days of epidemic sickness in peeping through wrought iron gates and over high walls at the lovelier epitaphs of two charming Charlestonians, Dr. Garden and Mr. Poinsett, who named the gardenia and the gorgeous poinsettia and immortalised themselves in the petals of flowers. Charleston hides its gardens behind high walls and in courtyards, but every balcony is hung with vines, the polished leaves of the magnolias and palms thrust above the highest walls, and in the spring the whole city is fragrant with the perfume of mimosa and jessamine, violets and roses. The gardens were closed to us; we could only press our faces against the gates and stare wistfully in at their tangled loveliness, but the Battery was open to every one with no annoying "Keep off the grass" signs and lots of comfortable benches in cool, shadowy places. I will leave you there, pacing up and down under the wide-spreading live oaks with the wind from the sea blowing freshly against you and Mrs. Ravenel's book, newly cut, under your arm. For I

have told you all I know (but not all I feel) about Charleston. Perhaps, when you have finished the book, you will have dinner with us—we have ordered Edisto Island oysters, Mallard duck from Georgetown, a salad, a Southern sweet and coffee. . . .

CHAPTER VI

A CONFESSION OF LAZINESS IN SAVANNAH AND A STEP FURTHER SOUTH TO "JAX"

I BELIEVE Allan was tired of being addressed as "Cap" by bellboys and Pullman porters. Because he bears his thirty years seriously he aspired to "Colonel," remembering the story our father tells of the rural newspaper correspondent who misinterpreted his hieroglyphic signature and announced that "Colonel W. D. Wam" was "in our midst." Allan had always longed to be called "Colonel" on his own account, so before we left Charleston he went in search of a hatter and bought a broad-brimmed felt hat. The clerk who sold the disguise confided to us that he was "bored to death with Charleston," but that he was "just in love with Savannah." When pressed for reasons, he explained that Savannah was a "right lively town with lots of parks and all lit up at night."

"I certainly do envy you-all going there," he said pathetically.

Allan, already wearing his Cy-arter of Cy-artersville hat and influenced by the subtle association, craved the gaiety of this "lit up" Savannah. We took leave of the hat clerk and hurried back to the hotel agency to buy our tickets.

"You can sit in the parks," Allan remarked suddenly, becoming audible after a long and pleasant contemplation.

And I chortled angrily: "The hat clerk did not mean what you think he meant. He meant street lights, not mint-julep illumination. Parks indeed!"

The ticket agent thought that we could catch the train to Savannah without any trouble. He wasn't quite sure when it would get into Charleston, for it was three and a half hours late.

"Late?"

The ticket agent seemed slightly embarrassed. "Yes'm. You see," he explained, casting madly about for reasons, it's a through train from the North, and they're having mighty cold weather in New York. Paper says it's down below zero."

"I suppose you mean that Southern trains suffer from the cold."

"Yes'm." The clerk giggled and rubbed his hands. "That's it. You'll want two tickets to Savannah, then?"

"If you are sure that the train is going to pass through Charleston at all to-day."

The clerk became discreetly hysterical. He considered us great wags. He stamped the two tickets and shuffled them as if he were playing a hand at poker.

"Can't you give us Pullman reservations?" Allan always asked this question, although he knew the answer by heart.

"No, sir." The agent was positive. "You can get them on the train."

But when the train finally ambled into Charleston, four hours late, every seat in the Pullman cars was occupied. A personally conducted "tower" of very old New England ladies was on its way to Florida, and had settled itself, apparently for life, in every available chair. So Allan was banished in lonely glory to the smoker, while a place was made for me beside an old lady who surrendered to my being there rather through weakness than because of any charitable instinct. The "tower" was very, very tired and crumpled and bored. Their Personal Conductor had disappeared, probably to the rear platform to think of a new answer to the unanswerable question, "Why are Southern trains always late?" I daresay the inspired Charleston ticket agent's excuse had never occurred to him,

although zero weather in New York was as good a reason as any other——

I sat rigidly at the New England spinster's side, trying to make myself as small as possible and staring out of the window at an endless panorama of swamps, at forests of ghostly trees dead in the suffocating embrace of hairy moss, at forlorn and untidy villages, at rice fields and tumble-down negro cabins, at whitewashed farm-houses set within corrals, at swamps and more swamps, until the spinning landscape became merely a repetition of itself. Whenever the train stopped, as it did very often (probably because of the cold up North), I went out to stand on the platform and to get a whiff of fresh air, for the old ladies apparently "towered" hermetically sealed against atmospheric contamination. There always rose to me an ardent odour of pigs, pine trees, moss and evergreens, the characteristic flavour of the rural South. Little knots of people watched the arrival of the train at all of these small stations, and one or two country wagons, covered with mud and drawn by lazy, dozing horses, waited for possible passengers or for a purely hypothetical freight. As the sun went down we entered timber lands, splendid forests of pine and cypress, blackly out-

lined against the magnificent conflagration in the west.

Through it all the old ladies yawned and stifled little moans of weariness. One of them, outrageously fat, lay full length on one of the chairs, her ridiculously small feet held aloft on a pillow, her fat hand waving a palm leaf fan. She had been to Florida before on a half-forgotten and wholly glorified honeymoon with "dear Mr. Hemingway, my first husband." She spoke with awe-inspiring familiarity of the "Pawnce de Leeon" at St. Augustine. She had never travelled in a personally conducted party before—they were vulgar and crowded and hurried. . . . Her voice, as acute as a buzz-saw, rasped the old ladies beyond endurance. One by one, as dusk fell, they put their little "travelling pillows" behind their aching heads and pretended to go to sleep.

It seemed to us that the forests and tangled swamps gave way to civilisation and to paving stones at the very gates of the city, for Savannah was not heralded by any suburbs; the train passed out of the darkness of the open country into the station with no more warning than a few scattered houses and a straggling procession of rural street lamps.

Three soot-grimed travelling salesmen got into

the Savannah Hotel 'bus with us. They had apparently been travelling and selling in small country towns, and the longing for sidewalks and asphalt, street cars, shops, bright lights and noise obsessed them, for they were New Yorkers to the last "woid" in their vocabularies. As the 'bus rattled through Savannah they burst into hymns of joy. A live town! Look at the lights —clusters of 'em—and electric signs and skyscrapers! It was not native soil, but to them it was flavoured with the essence of civilisation; it reflected New York and sent shivers of happiness through them. Broughton Street was not Broadway—there is only one Broadway—but it was at least crowded with people, ablaze with light, draped in the shreds of their true goddess's raiment. The sooty travelling salesmen were like pilgrims come upon a glimpse of Mecca. As we drew up at the door of the hotel and a crowd of bellboys and porters pounced on the luggage like buzzards, the three salesmen sighed profoundly.

"A live town," they said, *"at last!"*

Others of their genial class filled the gilt and marble lobby to suffocation and rejoiced openly in their native atmosphere of smoke, palms, page-boys, brass spittoons and leather lounge chairs.

The hotel graciously admitted having received our telegram and summoned a bellboy to show us the way to our rooms. We bewailed the cordial host of the past who offered the traveller not only shelter but hospitality. The clerk of a modern skyscraper hotel has no time for niceties; he cannot build a fire on the hearth for you or attend himself to your dinner or gossip pleasantly. He spins a huge key across the top of his desk, glances at your signature and raises two fingers, with the Pope's gesture, to summon a bellboy who will do the honours. We have often encountered darkies who, entrusted with this duty, felt the solemnity of the occasion. Many a coloured bellboy has swung wide our doors, and while waiting in delightful embarrassment for his tip has wished us a "sho' enuff good time." Most darkies like formality and little courtesies; they respond to luxurious surroundings, to eloquence and to good breeding. They are children and actors, and their simplicity may be their ultimate salvation.

But the bellboy who escorted us to our rooms in the Hotel Savannah was not a playboy of the Southern world, for he did not seem to think that the responsibility of our welcome rested on his shoulders. He put our suitcases down, deposited his tip and departed whistling "Un-

derneath the Stars." The Savannah had another way of meeting its duties as host, for the rooms were plastered with warnings, advice, suggestions and threats, all neatly printed on cardboard placards and affixed to the wall where they would be most likely to catch the guest's eye. I read some of the paternal notices aloud, while Allan unstrapped the suitcases.

" 'To our friends,' " the first one ran, disarming resentment very coyly. " 'If you leave your windows open, please turn off radiator. We should not be expected to heat the outside of our building.' "

"Good advice," Allan thought.

"Yes," I agreed, "but offensive, just the same. Here's another. Listen to this one! 'Office buildings are opposite this room. If you desire privacy, lower your shades.' "

Allan shouted with laughter. "Of all the infernal impudence! Go on—what else do they expect of us?"

"Oh, the next one is harmless enough. "If you do not wish to be disturbed, please place this card on outside of door and remove when leaving room.' "

"Thanks! What else?"

" 'We do not have a half-day rate; when room

is assigned to any one we will collect for full day.'"

"It sounds like a model prison. Go on."

"'Turkish baths in basement,'" I read, "and here is another, attached to the telephone, which says, 'Please use the pad and spare the walls.'"

We tried to meet all the requirements, and although it was very late went down to dinner, fearful of meeting with more printed warnings on the way. The dining room was not crowded, but it was "lit up" just as the hat-clerk in Charleston had said all of Savannah would be, and as an added attraction a whole series of bells, attached to the wainscoting and operated by electricity, played popular tunes to drown out the crash of crockery and the weaker efforts of the hotel orchestra. We reverted to type and abandoned chicken for steak, the best steak I have ever tasted, North or South. And the chronicle of the evening might have been a gourmet's pleasure if a page-boy had not come into the dining room shouting aloud for "Major General Leonard Wood."

Every one started and turned to stare at the erect, handsome man who called the page-boy to his table, and our waiter, creeping very close to whisper, told us that it was *the* General Wood who had been dining so inconspicuously just

GREAT SHIPS COME EIGHTEEN MILES FROM THE SEA
TO SAVANNAH'S FRONT DOOR-STEP

across the room. We had seen Raymond Hitchcock at the Monticello in Norfolk, Sarah Bernhardt had appeared for a moment on the platform of her private car, the "Mayflower," when we were waiting in the Charleston station for our train, and here was America's greatest general not ten feet away! We tried not to stare, but I found several excuses to turn my head in his direction.

After dinner we went out into crowded Broughton Street to look for a book store, and possibly to find a guide that would set our tourist feet on the right paths. We discovered a bookseller, but he had no guide book to offer us, shrugging his shoulders at our preposterous assumption that the history of Savannah could be reduced to a few paragraphs and sold to lazy trippers for a quarter. He led me into the back of his shop and pointed to a revolving bookcase full of heavy, thick, dust-powdered volumes, and as he wheeled the bulging shelves for my inspection he ran his finger over the titles. There were histories of Georgia in three ponderous volumes, histories of Savannah's settlement, its Revolutionary struggles, its great men; there were stories of John Wesley, who preached for the first time in America on the spot where the Savannah Custom House now stands; there were

bulky Civil War histories, memoirs and biographies, harbour reports, trade statistics. At each revolution of the bookcase I beheld new histories—illustrated histories bound frivolously to attract the sluggish traveller's eye; fat, businesslike histories bursting with dates and information. "Life of Oglethorpe," "Life of Wesley," "Life of Aaron Burr," "Life of Jefferson Davis," "Life of Lafayette," "The Civil War," "The Reconstruction." . . .

"All Georgiana," said the bookseller, giving the bookcase another twist and blowing away the dust that had settled on the gilt-edged pages of a history of the American Revolution.

All Georgiana!

I turned in a panic to Allan. "I am going back to New York," I threatened. "I cannot write the history of Savannah in a chapter limited, by contract, to five thousand words. It isn't fair," I wailed, becoming tearful, "to expect it of me."

We stared at the groaning bookcase in morose silence, while the bookseller, suddenly sympathetic, looked over the top of his spectacles and asked, "Are you goin' to write a book?" in the tone of voice which implies "Are you thinking of jumping over the moon, by any chance?"

"No," I retorted, turning on my heel, "I've given up all thought of it."

Outside in Broughton Street again I gave way to a violent attack of nerves. "You will have to take me to the movies," I said pitifully, "where I can forget Georgiana. I think Savannah must be the most historically complicated city in the world."

"You can skip it in the book," Allan said. He really believed I could, for he only sketches what interests him and I have to manœuvre, until the machinery of my literary style creaks, to write paragraphs that can be used as captions for his drawings. "You ought to be able to do something about it," he said, as we hurried up Broughton Street in search of a cinema. "Touch lightly on Savannah and bear down heavily on St. Augustine."

Vaguely comforted but not convinced, I followed him into an Arabian Nights' theatre, an Orientalised nightmare place made of cardboard, coloured electric lights, gilt and pink paint. A very sallow young man stood in the lobby and sprayed cheap perfume over us as we passed into the pitch darkness of the theatre, whether as a prevention or as a compliment we could not discover. Reeking, we stumbled into our seats and glanced up at the screen just in

time to see Theda Bara strangled. Behind us, row after row of people, reeking, too, surged upward in a huge amphitheatre, so that the last row of white faces, glowing like a string of phosphorescent moons in the strange gloom, hung just below the gilded ceiling. The organ wheezed and groaned and there was a constant procession of people going in and out, as unaffected by the Bara's death agonies as if the shadow on the screen were only the ghost of a bad dream, forgotten instantly and wholly unimportant. I wonder whether the motion picture, in giving the public horrors as a sort of after-dinner relish, has not dulled our sensibilities so that we could watch a murder or a hanging or the "shooting up" of an entire town with no other interest except a purely soulless one in the photographic possibilities of the crime? We were driven to the movies for entertainment, not only because they served to drive great anxieties (such as the history of Savannah) out of my mind, but because there were very few flesh and blood players in the South. The divine Sarah followed us all the way down the Atlantic Coast, giving two one-act plays while her little company bore the heavier burden of acting in French before audiences that waited only to glimpse the most famous and the most heroic

actress of her time. Cyril Maude, playing in "Grumpy," which I had seen on both sides of the ocean, appeared wherever the magnificent and weary Sarah had decided not to stop. I was profoundly sorry for both of them, for I could imagine the combined mental and physical strain of travelling all day, playing an exacting rôle at night and, in Bernhardt's case, sleeping, or trying to sleep, in a private car, lulled by the hissing of engines, the clamour of bells, the shouts of trainmen and the fiendish clatter of baggage trucks. While we could be pitiful of the two distinguished strollers, we could not watch them play every night, and our schedule seemed to tally exactly. And because the theatre, in any form at all, is essential to our winter evenings, we haunted the flickering darkness of the cinema caverns, often finding ignorance and vulgarity, sometimes happening upon the rare seed of art.

"Besides," Allan whispered, as soon as Theda Bara had been decently buried, and that divine mountebank Charlie had shuffled out of the shadows and had stirred laughter in the tiers of people that was like the rustle and roar of a rising wind, "and besides, no one likes history. I shouldn't think of going in for dates and all that sort of thing. People hate to be told any-

thing. Just arrange some sort of an explanation of my illustrations and skip lightly over Savannah."

I nudged him fiercely. "Look at Charlie," I said between my teeth. "Don't tempt me."

But we skipped lightly over Savannah the next day in an automobile, driving very fast when we came to historic ground and "just creeping" when there was nothing to learn. The original city laid out by General James Oglethorpe in 1733 is still the heart of Savannah, so that the view from our windows covered all of the colonists' fortified settlement and the towers and spires of the modern city. We could see the river, shining like a broad band of platinum where it skirted the city, a river deep enough to allow great ships to come the eighteen miles from the sea to Savannah's front doorstep. The morning paper informed us that eight million dollars' worth of exports had made the "below average" record for the month of December, so that we looked down upon the beautiful city from our lofty windows with modern admiration for her thrift, her success. Like a man who has "come back" from ruin and disaster, Savannah has survived the terror and the destruction of two great wars. During the Revolution, first the English and then the American troops held a line of en-

trenchments that girdled the city like a strangling noose. During the Civil War, the Confederate trenches faced the Union trenches within what are to-day the city limits. Out of the bitterness of defeat and the terrible period of reconstruction the modern Savannah has emerged, one of the best reasons for the commercial slogan, 'Keep your eye on the South."

The indescribably hoarse bell of Christ Church woke us to a wide panorama of this miracle, and as soon as possible after breakfast we set out to explore by motor what had looked so enticing from the fifth floor of the Hotel Savannah. The chauffeur was a chocolate-coloured boy who was so in love with his own hue that he had duplicated it in his clothes, achieving a *camouflage* which must have made him invisible on the shady side of the street. He was averse to being polite, as if good manners were in some mysterious way a surrender to the superiority of the white race. We told him to skip lightly over Savannah and left him to his own devices. And while I cannot believe that he was being intentionally subtle when he turned out of the city and took us to the old Hermitage plantation, it is true that he let us see all that is left of the tragic past of his people.

Tragic—yes, and incomparably romantic. The

approach to the Hermitage plantation is supremely beautiful; melancholy because it belongs to an age that is irrevocably lost, exquisite with the shadowy imprint of the legendary South, the South of magnificent distinction, beauty, pride, the art of living and the essence of good breeding. The Hermitage seemed to us the realisation of a literary dream, the picture of that vanished past which has come to be so real to us through the novels of Gilmore Simms, Cable, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mrs. Southworth, and the splendid stories of Miss Johnson, Winston Churchill, James Lane Allen, Joel Chandler Harris and Thomas Nelson Page—great spinners of adorable yarns, painstaking explorers into the rich fable-lore of the South, who have recreated the most romantic page in American history. The Hermitage plantation at Savannah satisfied our longings, stirred up memories of all the dreams we had ever dreamed of the South, filled us with satisfaction, as if the chimera we had been pursuing all the way from New York were captured at last, like a rare and elusive butterfly. It was all that a plantation should be. We spun toward the Big House along a magnificent avenue of live oaks that sprang from gnarled and twisted roots and arched overhead with the beautiful intricacy of Leonardo da Vinci's fres-

A MAGNIFICENT AVENUE OF LIVE OAKS

coed branches on the ceiling of the Sforza palace at Milan. The leaves lay one over the other, in an exact and bewildering pattern, shutting out the pale sunlight so that we ran through a tunnel of green shadows—a place for fairies and pretty ghosts. The road was sandy and weed-grown, but one had only to half close one's eyes to vision ladies and gentlemen on horseback galloping toward the House, moving down the cool and leafy avenue like men and women in a Gaston La Touche canvas. One had only to shut away the purring of the big motor to hear the more beautiful sound of laughter. . . .

There were the rows of slave huts, just as we had dreamed they should be, whitewashed, their roofs green with moss, their broad brick chimneys crumbling and tipped! No spirals of sweet-smelling smoke rose from the cabin hearths, but we had only to shut our eyes to vision the crackling pine logs lighting the single room of each simple dwelling, and to see the doorways crowded with rollicking pickaninnies. The sun, striking through openings in the dense foliage of the live oaks, fell across the road in bands of gold, like the light from clerestory windows.

The chocolate chauffeur stopped the car be-

fore one of the cabins and called, loudly and insistently, for some one within.

"Molly," he cried, "come on out heah; some one wants to talk to you."

We had never heard of Molly, so we were naturally curious, and as we watched the door of the crumbling cabin, expecting any miracle of such a miraculous place, an old negress emerged from the shadows and came slowly toward us. She was as bent and as gaunt as a witch, a myriad wrinkles puckered her black skin, she wore a scarlet bandana twisted around her head and tied with a knot in front like the *tignon* of Louisiana. She hobbled over to us and made a feeble pretence at a curtsey, and then, in a cracked and faltering voice she wished us "good day." She was the oldest woman we had ever seen, older than any living thing on the face of the earth, a cinder, a handful of black dust, a prehistoric mummy kept alive by some invisible, smouldering spark, a creature who had outlasted the past, projected into the twentieth century by some astounding freak of nature.

"Who is she?" I whispered.

"She was a slave," the chocolate chauffeur answered, lighting a cigarette. "Molly, tell us about the ole times—befo' the wah."

The ancient negress shook her head and spoke

again in her remote and quavering voice. "Ah've got a fever," she said. "Ah'm dyin'."

The chauffeur laughed. "She always says that," he explained. "Give her a qua'tah and *she'll* find her tongue."

I held out the coin and the old woman's smooth, cold fingers closed over mine like a monkey's paw. "How old are you?" I asked.

"Mo'n a hundred," the chauffeur answered. "Ain't you, Molly? She's the oldest col'ud lady in Savannah. Lived right heah in this cabin for seventy yeahs. Ain't that right, Molly?"

But the old woman would not answer. She held the quarter in the bright pink palm of her shrivelled hand and gazed at it fixedly like an ancient ape fascinated by the flash of silver. We drove on to the Big House, fearful lest it might not be as beautiful as we had dreamed it would be and that the magnificent avenue of oaks led only to disappointment.

But the Big House, spared miraculously to delight the hearts of just such foolish pilgrims as Allan and I, brought a shout of joy from us both. The gardens were weed-grown, the portico and the doorway were dilapidated and decayed, the windows were dusty, the wide roof sagged—but it was the Big House all the same! Ladies in ballooning hoop skirts had lived there,

all the fiery heroes of "befo' the wah" literature had loved and fought and lived happily ever after in that very house, negro potentates in livery had served wonderful dinners in the great dining room, and dancing masters, quaint and graceful, had pranced and pirouetted across the polished floor of the drawing room.

While we stared at the perfect stage setting for the pageant of Southern romance, a howling mob of tattered, barefooted pickaninnies dashed across the ruined garden and surrounded us. Their rags fluttered, their indescribably round eyes rolled prodigiously. "Dance fo' the gen'-mun," they shouted, "dance fo' the lady! Ten cents!" And they flapped their bare feet and snapped their fingers and slapped their ragged knees, raising a cloud of pumpkin-coloured dust. 'Dance fo' the gen-mun! Ten cents! Tam-an-y!" They danced like furious dervishes with shrill screams, rolling their bright eyes sideways at us, pawing the ground. "Tam-an-y," they sang, grinning and gasping, "Tam-an-y!"

Allan tossed a quarter to them and they fell on it in a tangled, writhing heap, the pink soles of their bare feet waving in the air, their faces buried in the dust. A young woman with a baby in her arms, who had followed them, shifted her corn-cob pipe long enough to ask us for

money, and I shall never forget the strangeness of the tiny, black baby hand that closed over my fingers and the pennies. "At least," I thought, "you were not born in slavery, you poor little baby." But there were tears in my eyes. The ragged heap on the ground disentangled itself and became ten shrieking pickaninnies again. "Dance fo' the gen-mun," they began, bursting into song, "dance fo' the lady——"

But the chocolate chauffeur, apparently disgusted, turned the car away and hurried back through the avenue of oaks to Savannah, covering the five miles as quickly as the law allows because he wanted us to see the new negro quarter of Savannah, rows and rows of neat frame and brick houses that have taken the place of the one-room cabins of ante-bellum days. He wanted us to see what freedom and ambition have done for him and for others like him. He was ridiculously proud of young negresses in white shoes, and tipped his hat to them as we passed; he ran slowly through the narrow streets of the quarter so that we might see pickaninnies, in sailor suits and socks, riding Kiddy-Kars along the sidewalks. . . . For how could he have known that rags are picturesque, that songs touch the heart, that simplicity is lovable, that the martyrdom of his race had touched our imag-

ination as its progress in neat houses, white shoes and Kiddy-Kars never will? We forgave him everything, for we realised suddenly that we were wrong and that the chocolate chauffeur was right. We had been demanding an eternal raggedness and poverty and picturesque ignorance for our own purely æsthetic enjoyment. Progress is not beautiful in its material aspect unless we realise the urge of the spirit behind it, the imperceptible but powerful lift of the ugly sprout, pushing its way through dingy mud toward the imperishable light of realisation.

We skipped over the rest of Savannah, very humble in spirit, finding at every turn of the wheel that the impassioned hat-clerk in Charleston was right about the parks. Savannah was given the wrong nickname, for City of Parks would fit her more exactly, to-day at least, than Forest City. A whole series of squares and little greens, running from the river southward through the city, is the chain upon which Savannah has strung her most beautiful buildings, clubs, residences and monuments. We counted each bead on this long rosary of loveliness, discovering that Savannah is not the sort of city that pays cash for its fireworks and dodges its taxes. Savannah dips down into her capacious

and bulging pocketbook and spends money lavishly to beautify herself.

At the Bonaventure Cemetery, just outside the city, we saw Spanish moss swinging from great trees in long, silver-grey streamers that brushed against our faces as we drove up and down the broad avenues. It was infinitely soft to the touch, like a fine seaweed, and swayed rhythmically in every puff of wind. I cannot tell you why these enormous streamers should have seemed beautiful to us when the strangling growth had everywhere else been repulsive and disfiguring in our eyes. Perhaps the very luxuriance of the growth, the prodigious festoons, endeared those particular avenues of moss-draped oaks to us. People moved about among the swaying pennants, appearing and disappearing like dancers seen against some forest background by Gordon Craig, a fantastic stage setting of the modern school.

We were supposed to catch a train that left Savannah for Jacksonville at twenty minutes after two, so we hurried through the ceremony of "checking" the Golf Club, the Yacht Club, the giant skeleton structure of the new Georgia Hotel, a few geometric suburbs blossoming with red-roofed villas and avenues of palms like forced gardens producing orchids out of the des-

ert sands, and hurried back to the hotel, convinced, in a confused way, that Savannah is rich and jolly, fond of sport, up-to-date, hospitable, self-sufficient and alert. Like all other cities, she hides her fashionable face from the gaze of tourists. Elegance rides in a motor or sits snugly behind the plate glass windows of a club or dines discreetly at home. Fashion speaks the same language the world over, in Paris, Cairo, Vienna, London, New York and—Savannah.

The train to Jacksonville left at five forty-five —the weather obstinately interfering with schedules—and it was not until very late that evening that we found ourselves in "Jax," the affectionate diminutive of an affectionate population for the gay city on the banks of the St. John's River. We found ourselves in an atmosphere of pea-soup fog, Florida tourists and a mysteriously transplanted Broadway, for all of theatrical New York had apparently answered the resistless call of the Jacksonville motion picture studios. We dined in the midst of a conflagration of stars, a glittering constellation of personalities. The Lambs' Club promenaded the lobby of the hotel while we sat in an obscure corner and did mental multiplication tables of their combined salaries.

I was very tired. I stared in pathetic wonder

at the beautiful actresses who contrived to look so rested.

"Did I skip too lightly over Savannah?" I asked, fearful of the answer before I was halfway through the question.

Allan, with his eyes fixed on Madame Petrova as she swayed (actresses always *do* sway, don't they?) down the lobby, answered positively, "We saw everything there was to see."

"I wonder," I whispered. Then I added in a savage voice, "I wish I were an actress."

I went to bed haunted by my inefficiency and a growing determination to "study up" Savannah as soon as I got back to New York. I remembered having seen Sherman's headquarters in Madison Square—what had *he* to do with Savannah? "Sherman's March to the Sea" ran through my mind like the refrain of a popular song, but I could not remember the way of his marching. My dreams were of Madame Petrova founding a colony on the Savannah River in 1733 and naming it Oglethorpe after the hero of the play. . . .

CHAPTER VII

AN AFTERNOON IN OLD ST. AUGUSTINE AND A CHRONICLE OF TIRE TROUBLE

I DO not know why there should be a mysterious affinity between long, black moustaches and yachting-caps, but it is true that men who wear the one inevitably affect the other. We encountered the combination on the morning of our last day in Jacksonville. The fellow had a motor that he was willing to rent to any one who was foolish enough to rent it from him, and he captured us on the very doorstep of our hotel.

We had started out immediately after breakfast, lured by a growing determination to visit St. Augustine whether it rained or not, and because the newspapers had invited us, every day for a week, to cross the river. "Take your fairy across the ferry" was Jax's morning reminder that Spanish St. Augustine, the crumbling and dreamy old-world city, could be reached in an hour or two by motor.

Everything conspired to our miserable down-

fall. "Mr. Foster's" amanuensis was hemmed in by tourists when we approached her desk, and we did not wait to ask questions about St. Augustine because she was in the middle of a detailed explanation, patiently given to an inattentive old lady, of how one goes from Jacksonville to El Paso in the quickest possible time. When we turned away the old lady was saying, in a positive tone, "Now, tell me how to get from Jacksonville to Portsmouth, New Hampshire." We knew that "Mr. Foster's" human time-table was quite likely to be creating schedules for the old lady until noon. So we had wandered out of doors, hoping to fall on some easy way to get to St. Augustine, and had fallen, on the very doorstep, upon the gentleman of the mustachios and the yachting-cap. His motor was for hire. He offered it, with the driver, for a ridiculously low price. He waylaid us, hesitating in the doorway, scented our uncertainty, divined our desire, and with a few dramatic and misleading words, he visualised a trip to St. Augustine, in *his* motor, which would be the crowning experience (I am using his phrase) of our Floridian days.

He looked like a rural interpretation of the villain in melodrama; his dyed moustaches drooped fiercely, his yachting-cap was vaguely

distinguished, his watch chain glittered. And we were charmed. Finally, of course, like hypnotised rabbits, we stepped into the car and agreed to pay the fellow's price. He whisked away the "Car for Hire" sign which adorned the tonneau, waved his long, white hand, bowed to us, and before we had had time to look at our bargain we had rattled briskly up the street on the way to St. Augustine.

The sun had come out tentatively, not as if it wished to really gladden the hearts of the sneezing, grippe-convalescent Northern hordes seeking warmth in Florida, but rather as if it were trying its hand at Spring weather and not quite succeeding. There were gusts of sharp wind and spatters of rain, varied now and then by whole half-hours of calm and sunny beauty when even the fruit trees might have been fooled into blooming before the next spilling cloud nipped the ambitious buds. When the sun shone at all it shone magnificently. The sky cleared like magic, the puddles dried and the whole countryside was fragrant with the peculiar sweetness of a freshly-washed world. We stopped at each burst of hot sunlight and lowered the top of the car, only to be caught in another flurry of rain before we were fairly on our way again. Finally we gave up trying to protect ourselves

and rode uncovered through sun and rain alike.

The ferry crossing was enlivened by a carful of movie-players in sulphurish make-up who were on their way to some "location" across the river. I think they enjoyed our curiosity fully as much as we enjoyed their nearness; movie-players have so few flesh and blood audiences, and I don't suppose that they differ from the other sort of player in that they like to be admired.

The road to St. Augustine is for the most part made of brick; it is laid as neatly and as exactly as a garden path, a warm red in colour, not inharmonious with the landscape but certainly not as beautiful as the white-shell-road. We had soon passed the forlorn and undignified suburbs of Jacksonville and could run more quickly. That is, we started out by running quickly. The rural villain's motor was a 1900 model; it rattled loosely as if it were made principally of tin and chains. Behind the young driver's back, Allan and I exchanged furious glances. I blamed him for the bargain, he blamed me for not having saved him from it. But we sat in silence, a silence full of tense control, and listened to the grunts, the spittings, the spasmodic and hysterical explosions of the motor. The brick road

acted as a sounding-board and increased the rattlings and reverberations to a perfect fury of noise. We would have been greeted and shamed by small boy hoots of "Ice wagon!" in the North. But small boys in the South are too polite to notice a vehicle as repulsive as ours. "I told you so" trembled in the air.

For a mile or so the car went forward gingerly like an ancient clock making a final effort to round off an hour before breaking down. And the driver, who was profoundly ashamed of the whole transaction, urged the wheezing motor up to forty-five and put off the inevitable disgrace by letting us believe that we would be in St. Augustine in time for lunch.

The way led through sandy country overgrown with palmetto scrub or tall, spindling pines. The scrub was ornamental but the pines had been slashed and hideously scarred in the interests of the turpentine industry. Each one wore a tin cup, like a blind beggar. Set well back from the road there were ramshackle cottages, negro shanties, where an effort had been made to lure a few vegetables and flowers from the sandy soil. But the scrub and the pine dominated the landscape, as they had done all the way from North Carolina, through South Carolina, Georgia and into Florida. The sameness

of the Southern landscape creates a feeling of drowsiness in me; everything is grey-green or silver-grey—a procession of two tones that finally lulls me to sleep. If one comes from the more colourful and varied North, one has to adjust one's sense of beauty to the neutral quality of the Southern landscape. I remember that when I used to leave the Austrian Tyrol in the autumn and go down into Italy, I had to adjust my eyes to the cindery grey of the upper Apennines and teach myself not to underestimate the beauty of the volcanic slopes above Pistoja because I had learned to love the glorious vitality, the rich greenness, the hardy pine growth of Kärnten. The American South has a sunny and gentle beauty of its own, a delicacy of colour, an endearing and elusive charm. The unique appeal of the country lies rather in its small cities and in the wide stretches of sparsely settled land than in the featureless ugliness of its large modern cities.

The South is romantic, and its romance is both historical and climatic. There is a gentleness in its skies, a softness in the landscape, a leisurely, unkempt grace and fascination in its gardens. The tragedy of the past rests lightly on the South; now and then one happens upon wistful reminders of a dead and gone magnificence

—a crumbling plantation house, a weedy garden, a stately mansion given over to official uses or sunken into poverty and decay. But while its beauty is reminiscent, the South is not melancholy. The love of it deepens in one as the Spring advances. With the slow flowering of the fruit trees, the fresh putting out of bright new leaves against the polished and thickly clustered foliage of the oaks, with the blossoming of violets, climbing honeysuckle, jessamine, dogwood and starry Cherokee roses, with the coming of camellias and magnolias, with the deepening warmth of the fragrant days your affections are ensnared, you linger, and in the end the drowsy South holds its own against the virile and boisterous North.

"Bang!"

"It's a tire," the driver explained.

We stopped while he repaired the damage, and we got out to "shake a leg" over a quarter of a mile of the John Anderson Brick Highway. There was nothing to sketch but a very shabby cow who was lipping at the stiff grass on the side of the road, so Allan photographed me standing by the car, standing in the car, seated magnificently in the tonneau and staring off at Florida, helping the driver, not helping the driver, and posed nonchalantly near the cow. The

driver laboured, his face scarlet with humiliation. He knelt in the road with streams of perspiration dripping off the end of his nose. I have never seen a man who perspired more recklessly or more completely. I pitied him, sitting coolly in the lofty tin automobile.

"There," he said, pausing for the first time to mop his streaming face, "that one's fixed. Now we'll try to get into St. Augustine on the others."

"What do you mean?"

"Them tires," he explained, "is rotten."

Rotten! We went on a few miles further. The sun came out and scorched the brick road and beat on the tops of our heads. *Bang!* This time we had to have a new inner tube. The driver descended, a whole kitful of tools was spread up and down the road, the car was jacked up, the wheel came off, the driver began to perspire again. An hour passed. Other cars rolled smoothly by on the way to St. Augustine, blowing up clouds of dust that settled slowly down on us. A puddle formed under the driver's nose. The inner tube behaved like a jack-in-the-box, and leaped out of the casing at one end while the driver and Allan squeezed it in at the other. The iron rim, in some inexplicable manner, had expanded, and no human power could make the

tire fit it again. We hammered, we tugged. The driver gave gallons of perspiration to the task. I wandered away into a pine thicket to let profanity help the situation. Another hour passed. And all the while, cool carfuls of fashionable, veiled ladies shot past on their way to St. Augustine and lunch. I came back pitifully to explain that all my life I had longed to see St. Augustine, that it was the city of my dreams; I said that I was going to Tampa on the morrow ("on the morrow" suited my state of mind much better than an undramatic "to-morrow") and that I was being subjected to an unmerited humiliation.

The driver looked up at me through a maze of moisture and explained that he was doing his best. Between us we eventually stuffed the lively inner tube into the tire and fitted the tire itself over the mysterious elastic iron rim. Then we started out again, and because all three of us were young we wiped out the memory of the wasted two hours and spoke buoyantly of lunch.

Bang!

But this time it didn't really matter. We were at the gates of Spanish St. Augustine. We sent the humiliated driver and the tin automobile ahead in search of a garage and, God willing, convalescence, while we passed through the fa-

THE SPANIARDS CALLED THEIR FORT THE CASTLE SAN MARCO

mous old gates on foot. Lunch could wait, for here was beauty. I cannot imagine a nobler portal to romance and antiquity. Directly beyond, facing the wide blue of Matanzas Bay, the great fort lay across our path. Behind us, Jacksonville and the Twentieth Century, noise, ugliness and the commonplace—

We crossed the wide green to the fort, and not waiting to examine the wide moat or the dungeons, went at once to the terreplein where we could see the whole magnificent sweep of white beaches and dunes, the marshlands, the Bay, Anastasia Island with its curious, Christmas-candy lighthouse, and the roofs and towers of St. Augustine.

The fortress rises superbly in the centre of a broad open space and it is near the sea, so that its massive coquina walls are stained by storm and wind with all the pearly opalescence of an oyster shell. It is woefully misnamed Fort Marion after a Revolutionary general who had nothing to do, as far as I could discover, with the history of the fortress. The Spaniards, who ruled St. Augustine uninterruptedly (save for a twenty years' British occupation) from 1565 until 1821, called their fort the Castle San Marco. And San Marco it should be to-day; the softer

Latin name suits the essentially Spanish pile as its patriotic misnomer never could.

Although Ponce de Leon landed near St. Augustine in 1513 and was inspired to name his discovery Florida, he did not find the fountain of youth he had set out for, and returned to Spain without having established a colony. The Huguenots came next, seeking refuge from religious persecution in what must have seemed to them a problematical world, a mirage; they crossed the ocean in two ships under Captain Jean Ribaut and landed not far from St. Augustine on what proved to be very tangible ground. But Ribaut had to go back to France for a larger company and for supplies; he sailed away, leaving twenty-five of his men in Florida to hold the beautiful mirage in the name of God and France.

The twenty-five held on until their provisions had given out, until hope had died, until their beautiful mirage seemed only a hateful and atrocious prison. For Ribaut did not return. He was in France trying to raise money, a feat that was as hard to accomplish in 1563 as it is now, when rich citizens clap their hands over their purses at the mere approach of an idealist. Ribaut begged while the twenty-five stranded Huguenots starved in Florida. And finally, when

they had given up all hope of him, they tried to cross the ocean in a fragile cockleshell of their own construction. At sea their supplies gave out altogether and the desperate Huguenots faced a hideous problem. They cast lots—and the gruesome game was played with who knows what deadly seriousness or atrocious playfulness —for the life of one man who should sacrifice himself for the others. One of the twenty-five lost and gave himself in an appalling martyrdom. The rest were rescued by an English ship and played no further part in St. Augustine's history.

De Laudonnière, another Huguenot of vast courage and superb credulity, landed in St. Augustine the following year. He did not settle there, but with the help of friendly Indians built a fort on the James River. The tardy Ribaut arrived in time to reinforce De Laudonnière, and St. Augustine and its vicinity might have become Huguenot if Philip II of Spain had not chanced to hear that the little band of heretics had settled themselves in Florida, thereby encroaching on Spanish North America and defiling a Catholic hemisphere.

Pedro Menendez de Avilas was sent on the pious mission of destruction. He so burned to destroy the detested Lutherans that he spent his

entire fortune in equipping an expedition of two thousand six hundred people. Nor did he forget to include in his company twenty-six priests who were to save the soul of any Huguenot who might repent or who might remember, in his extreme moment, that he belonged to the old faith. Bloodshed and salvation, cruelty and religion, the most ferocious hatred and the most exalted fanaticism brought the first permanent settlers to America fifty-five years before the Pilgrims set foot on Plymouth Rock. The Spaniards established themselves at St. Augustine and turned their attention immediately to the extermination of the Huguenots. Ribaut, who attempted to retaliate from the sea, was shipwrecked, and Laudonnière with the few survivors of the James River colony fled back to France.

Ribaut's shipwrecked crew surrendered to the mercy of Menendez. They would better have taken refuge with the Indians for the conscientious Hidalgo had no pity, although there was perhaps a shadow of gentlemanly consideration in his soul. He had his miserable captives led out of sight of their comrades with bound hands. And then he had them stabbed, ten at a time, in the back. Two hundred died the first day; the rest, one hundred and fifty, in batches of ten were stabbed with true mediæval courtesy on the

following day. Nor "by the grace of God" did Ribaut escape.

Apparently Menendez had no quarrel with his victims, but insisted that he had killed them, "not as Frenchmen but as Lutherans," as if blotting out a Huguenot soul was as unimportant as stepping on a beetle. The white sands of St. Augustine were consecrated by the blood of the heroic Frenchmen who had surrendered themselves in all good faith to a "merciful" enemy. They were avenged three years later by De Gourges, who captured one of Menendez' garrisons when the Spaniard was away and hanged the defenders to the very trees where so many Huguenots had swung. He was a complete avenger with a nice sense of humour, for he placarded the hanged Spaniards with a neat parody on Menendez' apology: "I do this not as unto Spaniards, nor as outcasts, but as traitors, thieves and murderers." The confusion of the grammar detracted nothing from the straightforwardness of De Gourges' intentions; he was possibly overwrought when he penned the thrust. But Menendez saw, and while he parsed the jest he reviewed his own soul. He established missions as far north as Chesapeake Bay and as far south as Cape Florida, and then feeling that his military and spiritual duty had been done, he

returned to Spain. To console you, in case you feel that De Gourges' vengeance lacked completeness, I will write Menendez' epitaph. He died of a fever, when only fifty years of age, "somewhere in Spain."

He had at least won Florida for Spain with comparatively little bloodshed. When one thinks what Alsace and Lorraine have cost France, what the winning back of the Trentino has cost Italy, the murder of a handful of Huguenots seems a merciful matter. St. Augustine remained under Spanish rule for nearly three centuries. The history of the place was lively enough to have satisfied the most adventure-loving settlers of those adventurous days. There were massacres, Indian raids, fights with buccaneers and raiders, bitter quarrels with the English settlers of the Carolinas. And all the while, in spite of the reluctance of the kings of Spain to send funds for the building of a fort which cost thirty million dollars, San Marco rose stone by stone on the outskirts of St. Augustine. Slaves and Indian prisoners did the greatest part of the work, carrying the blocks of coquina from the quarries, two miles below Anastasia lighthouse, to the bay, where they were loaded on barges and ferried across to the Castle. The fortress was

begun in 1665, but it was not until 1765 that the Spanish coat-of-arms was finally placed over the great entrance together with the inscription in Spanish which says that "Don Fernandez the Sixth being King of Spain, and Field Marshal Don Alonzo Fernandez de Herreda Governor and Captain-General of the city of St. Augustine, Florida, and its province, this fortress was finished in the year 1765. The works were directed by the Captain-Engineer, Don Pedro de Brazas y Garay."

Long before Don Pedro de Brazas y Garay took the glory of the building for himself, San Marco had had its baptism of fire. Governor Moore of Carolina had made no impression on its massive walls, but he had succeeded in holding the inhabitants of St. Augustine barricaded in the fortress for three months. Thirteen years later Governor Oglethorpe came down from Carolina and threw one hundred and fifty shells into the fort and the town. He might have succeeded in starving out the besieged Spaniards if he had not been driven away by clouds of poisonous mosquitoes. His bitten and outraged soldiers refused to endure the humiliating torment and Oglethorpe had to return empty-handed to Carolina.

During the British occupation, St. Augustine,

which had been nothing but a military post, became an active seaport, and there was a lively coming and going of schooners and square-riggers in the broad, beach-fringed bay. Ships from London and Liverpool, New York and Charleston put in at St. Augustine with supplies; some of them brought negro slaves. They set sail again with full cargoes of indigo and naval stores. To-day there are no traces of this activity. Matanzas Bay is a gentle sheet of water, ideal for the leisurely houseboat or for an occasional pleasure steamer bearing tourists to St. Augustine from Jacksonville, or from St. Augustine to the bathing-beaches of the more northern shore. Where the great square-rigged ships rode magnificently there are now noisy, explosive launches skimming back and forth, cutting a threadlike wake across the polished surface of the water.

At the close of the Revolution England ceded the valuable province back to Spain, but it is not known how many of the Spaniards who had fled British dominion returned to St. Augustine. The town had not fully taken on its Spanish imprint when the United States paid five million dollars for Florida and got themselves in for a trouble which had been brewing for years—the Seminole War.

We wondered, looking down the steep sides of San Marco, how it could have withstood its past, solid and impregnable as it is. The sentry-boxes and the watch-tower are still standing, and the combined efforts of all the besiegers have only succeeded in peppering the thick walls. Yet I suppose that one shell dropped into San Marco from a modern warship would powder its mediæval curtains, those "curtains and bastions made of solid silver" which swallowed up so many galleon loads of Spanish riches, into a scattered and obliterated dust-heap. The century of toil, the long procession of negroes and captive Indians bearing coquina blocks, have built a seventh wonder of the New World, a tourist treasure house where home-towners, with their wives and their daughters, come to gape at an architecture which is beyond their understanding, and to be touched, perhaps for the first time, by a beauty which is both romantic and historical.

Tribes of desperate tourists, generaled by a guide, pursued us around the terreplein and finally drove me headlong into the watch-tower. I fled upwards in a spiral and was knocked on top of my head by a cross-beam which drove my hat over my ears and deprived me of sight, hearing and the power of speech. So that when the

tourist horde arrived, instead of being in exclusive and aristocratic possession of the watch-tower, I was sitting in a dazed state half-way up the staircase, brushing stars out of my eyes.

They clustered about me while their guide explained the watch-tower, like the fellow in Madame Tussaud's Wax Works, with a total disregard for punctuation. I assumed the part of a scalped settler—done in wax—and escaped attention. The guide explained in a nasal voice, acute and toneless, with erratic pauses for breath:

"The fort has four nearly equal bastions known as St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Augustine and St. Charles and four (pause for breath) connecting walls called curtains ladies and gentlemen you will kindly notice that there are sentry towers on three of the (pause for breath) bastions while you are now looking at a tower which commands a view of both land and sea." He might have added, "also of a young woman who has banged her head on a cross-beam and is in a state of semi-consciousness," but he didn't. He went on, with a dramatic gesture and no commas: "The walls are twelve feet thick at the base nine at the top and twenty-five feet high ladies and gentlemen you will (pause for breath) now follow me and I will lead you into the inner

court or plaza which is one hundred feet square."

The home-towners, with a blank expression, turned as one man and trotted at his heels.

"That fellow knows a lot," Allan remarked with admiration and respect. "I'm going to follow him. That's an easy way to get history."

He had joined the home-towners before I could protest, and I had to reel in pursuit down the steep ramp (which I vaguely remembered as having been used as the background for countless movie dramas and where I had seen my favourite hero fight a magnificent duel), down to the plaza and into the cool darkness of the dungeon. Through all that maze of passageways, court rooms, council chambers and casemates there is an intoxicating odour of antiquity, a delicious combining of crumbling stone and musty, sunbaked walls, an odour of mould that is like the ghost of incense and old books. It took me by the nose and by the soul, that rare sweet smell of ancient wood and ancient stone, the faintly aromatic dust of centuries. Outside, the sanded courtyard of the fortress blazed like a mirror in the hot, white sunlight, little knots of tourists crossing and recrossing it kicking up spirals of dust. It must have looked the same to Osceola when he was confined in the court-room after his capture by General Hernandez.

He carved shallow niches in the coquina walls of his prison so that he could lift himself up to the grating and stare out at the patch of sun-flooded courtyard that was all he could see of the world. The guide's voice echoed around the room where the great Chief spent nearly a year, while the home-towners gaped at the pathetic niches or scratched furtive signatures on the walls, wanting, for some obscure and inexplicable reason, to associate themselves with the tragic and heroic dead.

The story of Osceola is bitter and humiliating in perspective. The Seminoles, like so many of the Indian nations of North America, interfered with the white settlers' scheme of things. It was suggested that they move south of the Withlacooche or west of the Mississippi; there were threatenings and cruelties, deceptions and treaties which bore a pathetic resemblance to a certain famous "scrap of paper." If the Seminoles could have been erased from the face of the earth, the Americans would have wiped the slate clean with a clear conscience. But it is not easy to dispose of five thousand people, harder still to deprive them of their hereditary farmlands, their homes and their hunting grounds. The inevitable war began with the massacre of Major Dade's men and lasted for seven years.

Osceola was the Petain of the Seminoles, a fearless, expert, keenly intelligent chief, a dangerous enemy and a man of extraordinary honesty. The story of his capture makes bitter reading and I will not repeat it here. I would like to believe that it was the only instance in American history of the violation of a truce, and that when General Jessup and General Hernandez captured the unarmed and unsuspecting chief they were influenced in some nameless and inexplicable way by the tragic atmosphere of San Marco; I would like to believe that their spirits were tinged by an alien treachery, changed mysteriously, inbued with the hates, the deceits, the instabilities, of a mediæval and Latin past.

Osceola was taken seven miles from St. Augustine and was imprisoned in San Marco with two other Seminoles, King Philip's son Coachoochee and Hadjo the medicine man. Coachoochee and Hadjo dug niches in the steep walls of the court-room and climbed eighteen feet to the ventilator, where they somehow managed to squeeze through the iron bars and drop into the moat. Coachoochee had torn his blankets into strips and was able to break his fall by sliding down the improvised rope; but Hadjo tumbled twenty-five feet into the moat, landing like a cat, apparently, on his feet. He

escaped, and history says nothing of his bruises.

Osceola stayed, strangely steadfast considering the manner of his capture. Of his people, only a few hundred remained, and his own martyrdom lasted scarcely a year. The guide, pointing to a hideous painted effigy of the great Seminole, swung into a comma-less eulogy delivered at top speed, as if he were afraid that the inner workings of his speechmaking were on the verge of breaking down. And all the while his eye appraised the home-towners, his attentive ear heard the tentative clinkings of quarters and dimes. . . . I felt as ashamed as if the unhappy ghost were hovering over my head, appraising my vulgar curiosity, the blank stares of the home-towners, the weariness of the guide. . . . I fled, leaving Allan to pay, not for *elemosine,* but for punctuation.

Lunch lay somewhere in the centre of the town, over by that cluster of Andalusian towers and roofs which rose above the simple one and two-storied houses of the residential and business quarters like the high-flung, scarlet peaks of the Certosa di Pavia. An ancient darkey, encountered on the green before San Marco, pointed out the way. He had "lucky beans" for sale in exchange for information, which seemed to me a polite and supremely well-bred way to earn a

living. You simply get in the way of confused strangers, put them on the right path, and then suggest in a winsome voice that a lucky bean, worn in the sole of the shoe, is a counter-irritant for blue devils. If the confused stranger happens to be a sport, and a surprising number of people are, he falls for the bean—and the information. (Wallingford please notice!) This is better stuff than blind and dumb beggary, far, far better stuff than the antics of the postcard pest; it smacks of honesty and good breeding. Allan bought two beans, and feeling that the war ought to encourage thrift, I asked another question.

"Where is the fountain of youth, Uncle?"

The ancient darkey was no more certain of the life-giving spring than poor Ponce de Leon had been. He scratched his head and answered sadly, "Ah disremember."

"Why, *you* ought to know," I said, and he beamed at the compliment.

"Ah disremember," he insisted. "Ah never can seem to recollect whichever fountain it is. Seems like it moves. Yes, m'am, it moves! When Ah was a l'il boy it was over yonder. Nex' time Ah come to look foh it, it was down yonder. And now Ah've disremembered where they've

done put it. Yessah, that fountain of youth don' stay whar it belongs mo'n a yeah at a time."

Allan whispered fiercely in my ear, as fiercely as it is possible to whisper, "Don't ask him another question. I haven't any *change!*"

So I fell into the historical habit and abandoned the quest. It doesn't matter about youth, anyway, when one is young. It is only afterward, when the precious gift is lost, that one would like to find the crystal source and drink long and deep. If we could only have youth *after* age! Youth is so often tragic in its ignorance, its profligacy, its unawareness, if I can put it that way! I've often wished that the whole scheme of things could be reversed; that we could be born old, wise, disciplined, weary, rheumatic and world-seasoned, and that we could pass with the years into a glorious, conscious youth. My idea of heaven is not complex—we shall be old-young, we shall walk with the free gait of children, we shall leap and rollick, climb and prance; we shall be sturdy, beautiful and invincibly unafraid, and we shall be as old as the old world.

St. Augustine has learned the secret of young old age. The crumbling walls of the unpretentious houses are stained ochre and blue and rose after the Latin fashion so prevalent in Spain and

in Southern Italy; the doors open out directly on the street and invite friendliness; there are pleasant gardens, sometimes set behind walls and not seldom blooming in the very dooryards or brightening a business street with staccato poinsettias and flowering bushes. Wherever the disastrous fire of 1914 has spared the wooden and coquina houses of the old Spanish period, there are delightful jutting balconies shadowed by steeply sloping roofs and often hung with bignonia vines or thick curtains of ivy. The town is sparsely built over a wide area in the leisurely manner of the past, and even the intrusion of modern "villas" and frame houses designed to meet the home-towners' "rooming" needs has failed to spoil the beauty of the narrow streets.

St. Augustine has fallen into a gentle and wholly delightful shabbiness since the passing of its climax of prosperity. The "Great Freeze" drove the more fashionable Northerners further south, to the gay, made-to-order resorts, Palm Beach and Miami, where they are willing to deposit a "guarantee" of their spending capacity in exchange for the dubious pleasure of paying four times what everything they buy is really worth. St. Augustine has been left on the fringe of the fashionable tide of Southern travel; its great hotels catch eddies of the stream early in

the season, when a few travellers break the long journey there; and again in the spring the returning rush drifts in and around the old Spanish town before it finally faces North again. But it is no longer *chic* to take a house in St. Augustine for the entire season. Fashion pursued the fox-trot, the Hawaiian orchestra, the high cost of living and publicity to a warmer climate, and left St. Augustine to drift year by year into a lovable seediness, an endearing informality, so that it has become itself again after a period of excitement and ostentation. The greatest number of its winter visitors are from the Middle West. They are not fashionable and they are easily amused. St. Augustine can be herself with them; she does not have to make her sandy, meandering driveways into boulevards or trim her neglected gardens or go into business or pretend to be a modern city. The home-towners are a comfortable lot, not over-imaginative; they will never notice that St. Augustine is getting to be a little out of style and that Flagler's second sweetheart, Palm Beach (the hussy!), has walked away with most of her admirers. The home-towner loves St. Augustine.

We encountered him all the way across St. George Street, sauntering in the warm sunlight (for the sun had come out for good) with his

home-town paper in his pocket and an air of purposeful holiday-making about him. The postcard shops were doing a lively business, and I daresay that the evening post to the Middle West went burdened with coloured views of San Marco and the Anastasia lighthouse and many harmlessly exaggerated accounts of "tropic" Florida, palms, flowers, oysters and alligators.

The only alligator we saw in Florida occupied a stone bathtub in the Plaza, and we paused on our way across the square to hang on the rim of his prison and admire the few bumpy bits of his anatomy that showed above the brackish water. His eyes were closed and he wore a terrible smile, like the fixed grin of a prehistoric mummy. He was loathsome and as immovable as a stone, and although we would have liked to join the circle of small boys who had attached themselves to the railing in a hopeless passion for the inscrutable reptile, we really *had* to have lunch.

We had fixed on the Ponce de Leon as the ideal place for that ceremony, but when we stood in King Street between Hastings' two masterpieces, the Ponce de Leon and the newer Alcazar, we decided in favour of the less famous of the two. The Ponce de Leon's terra cotta towers and wide-flung roofs are perhaps too magnifi-

cent for a town as architecturally simple as St. Augustine. We turned into the Alcazar because we liked its beautiful façade and the truly Spanish courtyard filled with the splash and tinkle of fountain jets and blazing with flowers. Here, we were in the fashionable atmosphere again. Young men in white flannels lounged in the corridors, discreet children rolled hoops along the garden walks and very modern young women sat decoratively about in summer gowns. Outside, in the streets of simple St. Augustine, the natives were wearing overcoats and furs, and complaining bitterly of the cold. Fashion said, "This is a winter resort; it is supposed to be warm," and wore white. The same thing happened in Cairo and Palermo, Biskra and Monte Carlo before the war. One shivered, but tradition kept winter flannels under lock and key.

We had lunch to the tune of the fountain jets, with a glimpse through an open door of the sunny cortile and a shower of purple bougainvillea that poured down from the second story and sprayed its fallen petals over the garden walks.

"This is Spain," I said.

"M'am?" The waiter had thrust the menu under my nose and thought—heaven knows what he thought.

"This is Spain," I said again, trying to catch Allan's eye.

"Yes, m'am," the waiter answered. "Will you have some soup? The chicken soup is very nice, now? Or perhaps an hors-d'œuvres?"

"This," I whispered weakly, "is Spain. . . . Bring me a large sirloin steak, potatoes O'Brien —that's a Spanish name!—artichokes and afterwards a salad."

Allan looked up as the waiter rushed away. "If it *is* Spain," he said bitterly, "I can't afford a Rabelaisian feast like that! Ham and eggs cost two dollars and a half, my dear."

When Allan says "My dear," his affection is at a low ebb. I choked over the steak although it was fearfully good. The waiter was an artful creature. He knew the trick of making you feel that the poverty of your order pained him deeply. He suggested, by his raised eyebrows, that he had always waited on financially unbridled people. He hovered, murmuring that the asparagus was very good, that we might like mushrooms, that he could bring us, if we only give him the word, food worth twenty dollars. He deplored our plebeian steak in his very manner of serving it. In the end, of course, Allan succumbed to his blandishments and, avoiding my

eye, ordered an elaborately indigestible dessert which neither of us wanted.

Instantly, as if his purpose were accomplished and he had no further use for us, the waiter became haughty and aloof; while we tackled the expensive pastry, he joined one of his co-fiends and gossiped softly. Nor did our bill impress him; he tucked it carelessly, upside down to spare my feelings and to foil my curiosity, under Allan's plate, and then bore away a ten dollar bill for mutilation with the indifference of a bank clerk.

But we recovered our self-respect as soon as we reached the sunny Plaza again. We sat there through a drowsy hour, watching the life of the little city as it ebbed and flowed through the square. The flecked shadows of the oaks and cedars and splendid palms made fantastic patterns on the walks and on the greensward. Every passerby of possibly Spanish complexion, and they were many, stirred us to lively discussions. Were they really descendants of the first Spanish settlers or of those romantic Minorcans whose history is so tragically woven into the complex story of St. Augustine? You probably remember, unless you "always skip the historical paragraphs" (I do, except when I have to write them!) that when Florida was ceded to England

in 1763, the outraged Spaniards fled St. Augustine bag and baggage and took their hurt feelings to Cuba.

The Minorcans were brought over not long after the change of rule by an English planter, Nicholas Turnbull, who put the simple and unsuspecting people to work on his indigo farms at New Smyrna and then virtually enslaved them. They were too guileless, or too intimidated, to know that Turnbull had no legal right to force them to pay for their passage in terms of servitude, and they had endured this intolerable martyrdom nine years before one of them, learning somehow that there was an English governor at St. Augustine, escaped and took the story of his people's humiliation to an English court. And since the liberated Minorcans settled at St. Augustine, leaving Nicholas Turnbull high and dry on his labourless indigo farm, it is probably Minorcan and not Spanish blood which darkens the eyes and cheeks of those olive-skinned and beautiful St. Augustinians who passed us in the Plaza.

We were caught into the spirit of the siesta hour, too lazy to go into the Catholic cathedral which faces the Plaza on its northern side. We sat, instead, on the comfortable garden bench and looked at the beautiful simplicity of the

façade, unbroken save by a statue of a saint set justly in a niche, and by a triune belfry and a cross. Children scampered by, knots of gossiping and laughing negroes ambled past on their own mysterious and leisurely business, flower sellers displaying neat little bouquets of gardenias and camellias on wooden trays meandered up and down making picturesque figures of themselves, and everywhere the home-towners rattled newspapers and shifted with the sun from bench to bench. The old stone obelisk reminded us of a certain little fountain in the Cascine gardens at Florence; if you have been there you will remember the dedication to Narcissus and the shallow bowl of clear water and the emerald shadows of the ancient grove of oaks.

The tin automobile, making hideous sounds, roused us from our gentle laziness. The driver spied us from the street and we went back to the car reluctantly, like victims going to certain torture. The garage had done its utmost for the tin ruin. The tires were bandaged and plastered and trepanned and stuffed to the bursting point with oxygen. And the driver, still copiously bedewed and almost invisible under a coat of grease and mud, assured us on his oath that he could "make forty all the way back to Jax."

It was sunset when we left the town, for we

were beguiled into an "oldest house" which proved to be the wrong one and where we saw nothing but a mildewed print of Osceola, a chair made of elephant's tusks and some other mid-Victorian curios that had nothing to do with St. Augustine or antiquity. While it cost us nothing to view these exhilarating horrors, it cost a quarter to take leave of them!

When we swung (oh, yes, we were swinging when we started) out of the old gates, the sky was quite magnificent and the wide Bay had taken on a deep and luminous blue. We hurried through a long avenue of moss-draped oaks where I shut my eyes because I don't like moss, particularly when it is choking splendid old trees in a death embrace and hiding the rich green of leaves with its drab, bone-hued ugliness. Twilight found us rattling swiftly——

Bang!

We descended; we patched, we spoke hopefully of its being the last time. Then on.

Bang!

The struggle all over again. Then on.

Bang!

Terrible curses from the driver. *All* the tires were gone now. And it was dark. And we were ten miles from Jacksonville. We stopped. The lights went out and refused to burn again.

It was chilly and lonely. A white mist drifted close to the ground, but overhead a conflagration of stars burned remotely. Frogs cheeped, trilled and whistled liquid, bubbling whistles. Again the driver knelt and probably perspired. I didn't care. I hoped that some dashing motorist would happen along and offer to take me—not Allan or the driver—back to Jacksonville. But no one happened along except an inconceivably ragged negro who rose out of the swamps and squatted near us to stare dumbly.

"It's no use," the driver admitted in a dull voice, rising from his knees and clapping his dusty hands together. "We'll have to go in on the rims."

And we did. Ten miles—on the rims—it surpasses description. At eleven o'clock we drove up to the door of the Seminole in what was left of the tin automobile. And there on the doorstep was a smiling gentleman with moustachios and a yachting cap. He bowed and extricated us from the wreck with tender murmurs.

"I trust," he said, "that you enjoyed the trip."

Can you, now can you, beat *that?* If I had had the strength I would have tweaked his nose. As it was, I watched Allan count out seventeen one dollar bills into the creature's hand. Then, I think, I fainted.

CHAPTER VIII

TAMPA, SPANIARDS AND THE GREEK SPONGE FLEET AT TARPON

ALL we saw of Tampa, to begin with, was the enormous Tampa Bay Hotel. As usual, our train was late—three hours and a half late, this time—and we had stumbled into the first taxi-cab, too dog-tired to even glance at the city on our way through it. When we got to the hotel we wondered whether we should ever see anything of Tampa beyond the endless halls and drawing-rooms, lobbies and porches of that prodigious hostelry. A jaunty Northern coon snapped his fingers and rattled the keys of number five hundred and ninety-six and five hundred and ninety-seven, as we panted at his heels past miles of doors, across acres of red carpet, down a corridor that went on like a nightmare—

"Dinner at seven," he said. And added with a broad Boston accent, "It's half-past eight now."

The insinuation was so plain that we scarcely

waited to brush off the accumulation of white Florida dust which had settled on our clothes, but started out to dinner like people with a vision, pursuing the promise of food down monotonous miles and miles of red-carpeted corridors. The dining-room, when we finally got there, was like an Orientalised Pantheon, so astounding in its proportions that we entered it with awe and our tiptoeing echoed around the great dome like the thunder of an army. We hurried through our dinner because it required at least three thousand electric bulbs to light our solitary repast, and the head waiter stood with his hand on the switch which controlled the illumination, depressed, I think, by the prodigal wasting of so much brilliance. Dinner came from a far-distant kitchen and, in spite of precautionary covers and wrappings, arrived cold. But the delicious oranges which we had for dessert were picked in the hotel gardens, and we fancied that they were still warm from the afternoon sun.

We went to bed overwhelmed by our surroundings. It was like being in the Alhambra, if you can imagine the Alhambra comfortably furnished in the late-Victorian manner. In spite of "hot and cold running water in

every room," you looked instinctively for a bell-rope.

It was breathlessly hot—as unlike January as January on the Riviera. We put out the lights, and with the windows wide open leaned on the sill and breathed deeply of the moist night air, fragrant with the spice of flowering bushes and trees. And for the first time we felt that we were really in the romantic South we had been pursuing all the way from Maryland through snow, sleet and dripping fog. Overhead the arch of the sky was luminous with swarming stars, little ones twinkling, big ones very steady and blue, a wide path where the Milky Way flowed through them all from the top of the heavens down into the tangled darkness of the garden. We could see the closely-packed foliage of the wide-spreading oaks, a spray of ghostly, feathery bamboo, a tall palm with a cluster of leaves atop like a Japanese baby's hair-cut, and, shooting starward, a minaret with a silver crescent balanced sideways on its tip.

The morning was even lovelier. The dining-room was less like the Tomb of Napoleon (or did I say the Pantheon?) when it was full of people, and there was an animated bustle of New England waitresses and mannered head-waiters. The coffee, brought at a dog-trot by a

conscientious waitress, survived the journey from the kitchens and was still steaming when we poured it into our cups. It is easy to see why the hotel management chooses its employés from Puritan stock!

We saw lots of nice, comfortable old ladies. "Not chic," I whispered to Allan, "but Chicago." There were a few old gentlemen advertising by their knickerbockers that they intended to play golf. There was a dangerously lovely female and a handful of exuberant Spaniards chattering about the price of tobacco as if it were lyric poetry. And of course the inevitable hotel "undesirable," the pathetic, snubbed little man who looks like a Portuguese Jew, wears white flannels, turns his feet out, flashes a diamond ring, and is eager in a dumb, doglike way, to meet some one who will talk to him, and who never does, and who smiles and smiles. . . . It was amazingly like the Riviera before the war. I felt a reminiscent thrill because the women all "marcelled" their hair and wore pearls to breakfast. The world of war and suffering was forgotten. This was the dining-room of some *Hôtel des Anglais* or *Grand Hôtel de New York* as long ago as the spring of 1914, when Americans still rushed to Europe for the sort of lazy and purposeless enjoyment they are

now seeking in Florida. There was perhaps not so much turning of the morning paper to the Society and Dramatic columns, but rather an ostentatious and dutiful scanning of the first page. Yet I felt that the poignant anguish of Europe was far removed from the leisurely well-to-do Americans who were sunning their well-nourished, comfortable bones in the South. We thought we had detected a flaw in the local colour until we discovered a roulette outfit at the cigar-stand, where you could play for a "smoke." It was not *petits chevaux,* of course, but what do you expect? After breakfast Allan played forty cents and won a nickel cigar, and, puffed with victory, we went out into a trembling, joyous day ablaze with sunshine.

The hotel faces the Hillsborough River and the city across a wide strip of tropical garden. Along its prodigious façade eight minaret-like towers, steely blue in colour, thrust against the sky and glitter quite magnificently. There are all sorts of intriguing and delightful African doorways and Moorish windows, fretted balconies and arched porches. A motion-picture director in search of local colour would find exotic backgrounds in the gardens of the Tampa Bay Hotel ready-made and guaranteed to fit. Algeria, Naples, Monte Carlo, Biskra, Tunis—

they are all there! Little squads of tourists were being piloted over the grounds and through the hotel by the jaunty and supercilious bellboys, whose greatest climax was reached when they announced crisply that all the "trimmings" of the hotel were made of steel, and to prove it rapped sharply on the railings or on one of the pillars of the porch. The tourists whispered among themselves and rapped, too, producing a metallic clatter.

We followed a path which led to the river's edge. The ground was still wet with the night mist, the grass drenched and fragrant in the shadows. There were clusters of bamboo trembling slightly in the steady, warm wind, and lines of cabbage palms and patches of shiny-leaved bushes—magnolia, orange, gardenia and holly, with here and there the fresh, green foliage and beautiful shade of an old live oak. There were blazing poinsettias everywhere, gorgeous purple bougainvilleas and the orange flame of the bignonia vine. Camellias and azaleas starred the garden walks. It was pleasant to wander slowly through the checkered sunlight, admiring the polished leaves of the sweeping palm branches. There were palms that sprayed like fountains and palms that grew in symmetrical clusters, squat palms and very tall

WE COULD CHAT COMFORTABLY WITH THE CAPTAIN
WITHOUT STIRRING FROM OUR GARDEN BENCH

ones, and big patches of palmetto scrub rustling crisply like a lady's fan. The benches were already filled with less fashionable tourists and roomers, the easily-pleased home-towners already encountered in St. Augustine, who had brought their morning papers or their knitting, and had settled themselves comfortably with their backs to the sun for the whole morning. Tampa owns the Tampa Bay Hotel, and its gardens are thrown open to the public.

At the river's edge we found a small sailing-boat anchored so close to shore that we could chat comfortably with her captain without stirring from our garden bench. She was called the *Sir Francis* and had come all the way down from Seattle, through the Panama Canal and up the Florida Coast.

"How long did it take you to do it?" Allan wanted to know.

"I was eighteen months in the doin' of it, sir," the Captain told us, "and I 'ad as fine a time as ever a man 'ad."

We judged he was English.

"Yes, sir! Born in Tilbury. That's a country!"

He spat rhythmically into the water while we discussed the war.

"England always wins," the Captain said. He

had a short memory, or else English history-books don't make much of 1776. But when he said with great violence, "You watch 'er! When England gets through, there won't be a 'Un in Germany," we cheered from our garden bench.

"Come aboard," he invited us, feeling that we were sympathetic. "I've got a tidy little ship, I 'ave."

So we got into the rickety tender and went out to the *Sir Francis* to pay a call. Her cabin was not quite high enough for us to stand erect in, but roomy enough, the Captain assured us, "for little fellers" like him. There was an iron stove, a bunk which folded up and became a bench by day, a table, and, of all things, an electric light to read by! No New York bachelor keeping house in an uptown flat could possibly be more comfortable.

"I'm going on to the Bahamas to-morrow," the Captain told us, rhyming Bahamas with bananas somehow. "All alone I am, too. And I've seen some queer things."

No doubt. He had pink-lipped shells from far-away beaches, huge conches fluted and singing, a pearl-like fragment as multi-hued as the tropic sea where he found it, dried sea-porcupines strung like lanterns from the cabin roof, lace-bark from South America, and the funniest

collection of stones and broken crockery I have even seen. He was a travelled man and a romantic man. He was doing what nine men out of ten, once in their lives at least, long to do, and for me he was tinged by all the dreams I have heard dreamed aloud. But he was perfectly unaware of being romantic. He peeled potatoes for his lunch and spat over the rail.

"Tampa's a fine place," he said. "Better go ashore and look her over. If I didn't 'ave to be getting on to the Bahamas, I'd stay a month. Glad you came aboard. Not at all, sir. Thanks!"

So we left him, and following his advice went to look Tampa over. I'll tell you what we found, that day and many other days of warm wind and white sun.

There is an office in Tampa where you are bound to hear talk of the sea. You can find it, if you search, in a new office building which overlooks both the harbour and the city. Before the war, sea-going men from all over the world used to climb up there for a smoke and a chat whenever their ships called at Tampa. And it was our privilege to talk about Tampa with the genial Italian agent who had played host to so many travellers. From his window he pointed out the little square which was all

of Tampa twenty-five years ago, and then swept his hand toward the new city with a simple gesture which meant, "Still growing!" Behind a row of modern skyscrapers, some of them ten or twelve stories high, the big factory chimneys of Ybor City and West Tampa belched black smoke-plumes against the immaculate blue of the sky.

Then the agent turned back toward the harbour and pointed out the Government dredges at work in the channel and the site of the proposed estuary, where he said there would some day be municipal docks large enough for "fifty steamers to load and unload at the same time." He brought maps and showed us how Tampa Bay cuts northward into Florida for thirty miles, splitting into two natural harbours at its furthermost tip. He pointed out Gasparilla Island, where La Fitte's rebel pirate held his orgies. He dealt in facts and in visions, tracing with his finger the present-day harbour and the infinitely larger, deeper port of the future.

"There was no Tampa thirty years ago," he told us. "When I came here from the Abruzzi, Tampa was a little cluster of rude houses on the bank of the Hillsborough River—you could have put it all in the crown of your hat. H. B. Plant had just built his railway through to Port

Tampa—here it is on the map, ten miles from here, d'you see? Plant was the Flagler of the Florida West Coast, and he dreamed of a great seaport town on Tampa Bay. Of the two harbours he chose, not this, but the other, and for a while it looked as if Tampa were going to disappear in the new glory of Port Tampa. But certain independent business men, who were crowded out by exorbitant freight rates and the soaring price of real estate, moved away from Plant's city and settled here." He shrugged his shoulders. "Have you been in Port Tampa? To-day it is deserted and forlorn; grass grows in the centre of the streets; the houses are crumbling away. Now look out of the window at Tampa! You see, the capitalist's vision of a seaport town on Tampa Bay has come true, but it is not just where he dreamed it would be."

The agent went with us to the waterfront, and we had the unique pleasure of walking across the sandy stretches where "some day" the municipal docks will entertain those fifty steamers. It was late in the afternoon and the harbour glittered magnificently, catching the fiery reflection of the setting sun. A lonely interned Austrian lay just outside, her rusty sides blazing. Closer in, a steamer was loading phosphate under the towering phosphate elevators of the Sea-

board Air Line. Judging from modern standards, most of the ships we saw were small, and the agent told us that the European war had greatly reduced the activity of the port. Near us, a schooner was being loaded with lumber; a score of negroes rushed the cargo aboard, singing as they worked. One of them chanted a verse in a thin falsetto, and the rest followed him, full throated and joyous. There is a catch in the negro voice, like the Swiss yodle, which always squeezes something in my heart. It is perhaps because they sing folk-music, piercingly sweet, poignantly sad and universal in its beauty.

The big schooner belonged to the agent. He confided to us, as we watched the simian antics of the negro workmen, that the ship had had a lurid past.

"I found her out in the Gulf," he told us, "floating bottom-side up. It was the third time, mind you, that she had turned turtle and killed her whole crew! I hauled her in, made her over, rechristened her the *Charles Wiebe* for luck, killed all the little hoodoos and sent her to sea again. She carries lumber to Havana."

"An incorrigible murderess," I said, thinking of Conrad's story.

"Oh, no," he answered, smiling, "she has reformed!"

You would like Tampa for the I don't know what of the foreign in its atmosphere, something intangible and exuberant which the ten thousand Cubans and Spaniards who live there have charged the air with, perhaps! One sees Spaniards everywhere, some of them still untouched by that process of Americanisation which puts peg-tops on a Castilian and teaches him how to say "Sure!" We saw some splendid old fellows, seamed and leathery, wearing the broad, black felt hat and the flopping trousers of the Spanish peasant, and swarthy young men who were the living embodiment of Zuloaga's canvases. Their quarters—street after street of whitewashed shanties—are near the big red-brick factories of the Cuesta-Rey, the Perfecto, the Principe de Gales and a half dozen other cigar manufactories at West Tampa. Here and there a patch of garden has been scratched enough to nourish a feeble poinsettia or a rosebush. Spanish women smile from the doorsteps and Spanish babies rollic in the gutters. On Sunday and festa days, the girls promenade arm in arm, giggling and flirting, the men swagger and smile, the old people look on from the cool shadow of the doorways—it is Spain transplanted. And everywhere there is a fragrant odour of tobacco,

as if some one had just opened a huge cigar-box!

In Tampa the sidewalks are shaded by permanent awnings and there is the same play of light and shadow which you find in an arcaded town—the street flooded with sun, a smashing riot of colour and movement, the sidewalks cool and shadowy. At night, Main Street was crowded; the shops, with their display windows brilliantly lighted, were all open, and for the first time since we left New York we saw pretty girls. They strolled up and down the arcaded streets or sat on high stools before marble soda-water shrines, sipping pink drinks through a straw, and Allan was so enraptured that I had to steer him into a Movie Theatre to shift his attention.

The "movies"! The histrionic intoxication of the modern wayfarer, a shadowy substitute for the strolling players, the marionettes and circuses of Gautier's day! We joined an audience of tender little children who were watching a Brieuxesque drama which would have sent shivers of horror down an Apache's spine. The tender little boys and girls chewed gum and stared solemnly and—sat through it again! They were still there, chewing and staring, when we

escaped. Poor, funny little Tampa-ites! And we were denied *Ivanhoe* at their age. . . .

More than anything else, Tampa delighted us because it was clean. I don't know why I profess myself so loudly a lover of the spick and span. I relish the ardent flavour of cheese and sausage in the Borgognissanti at Florence and that inexplicable odour which takes you by the nose and by the soul over behind the Venetian fish-market; I like the mud at Tivoli and the dripping walls at Assisi, plastered with the filth of a thousand years; nor do I hold my nose in dainty horror at Santa Lucia. But a puddle in a modern American city offends me, and an eddy of dirty newspapers in the gutter arouses all my civic ire. It has always seemed to me that since Newness is the symbol of our youth, and because there has been no time for mellow decay, we ought to be intolerant of neglect. Tampa did not let the post office and the court house carry off all the civic honours, in the slovenly manner of so many American cities. Everywhere there were substantial houses, many of them built in the Spanish style which is so perfectly harmonious under the Florida sky. And there were attractive clubs, parks, boulevards and avenues of palms and live oaks. Even the drawbridge had felt the need to be beautiful. It opened in

the middle like a pair of scissors and kept its machinery hidden under a frivolous little pavilion!

Handbills were being distributed in the streets announcing pinkly that at the *Teatro Centro Astruriano, Esta noche Sabado, Enero 20, a las 8 en punto,* there would be a performance of *Rigoletto, Gran Opera en 4 actos del celebre Maestro G. Verdi.*

I went, hoping to hear something frightful so that I could be funny about it. But the Mancini Company disappointed me by giving a really good performance of *Rigoletto.* It was the sort of singing and the sort of audience we have long ceased to hope for in New York. Between the acts all the young men paced up and down the lobby, making vociferous gestures and pretending that they knew everything about style and tradition. Tampa? America? We had to pinch ourselves to drive out the hallucination that somehow we had stumbled into Spain.

Later in the week, as a very particular treat for the American tourists, a *Gran Funcion Extraordinaria,* grand opera moved across the Hillsborough River to the Tampa Bay Hotel Casino and *Trovatore* was sung to an almost invisible audience. We stood near the stage door and heard the outraged impresario curse

the whole tourist tribe in seven ardent tongues.

"They are unmusical dogs," he roared, "fit for nothing but hand-organ symphonies!"

We went back to the hotel very saddened, and found that tourists do like music, after all! The lobby resounded with ragtime, and a lonely hall-boy was flapping an ecstatic one-step, on his way somewhere with a pitcher of ice water. Every one else had "gone to dance," he told us. He was a Boston bellboy, but he couldn't keep his feet still. We, too, went to dance. A drum, a sobbing saxaphone, a whining ukelele, a piano and a violin made music in the ballroom. Tum, tum, tumity tum, click, click, clickity *bing!* Zip, zip, zipity *smash!* Bang, bang, bimbledy *bang!*

"Oh, isn't it *great?*"

They skipped and slid and swaggered and minced, old ones and young ones. They whirled and stepped and walked like jerky automatons; they clutched and clung and spun on their toes. Zing, zing, zingity zing!

We stepped out on the polished floor and instantly forgot all about *Trovatore.* Zipity zip! What is American music coming to, anyway? Has any one ever stopped to think that this sort of thing is wilder than a Hungarian spasm? Has any one—choo choo, chiggity choo—ever stopped to think that there never has been a

symphony all in ragtime? Or an American rhapsody? I wonder—

"For heaven's sake, stop wondering," Allan said, "and dance."

So we danced.

The hotel and its gardens were alluring, but the time had come when we had to decide to spend the rest of our winter vacation in Tampa or go on at once towards New Orleans. And Tarpon Springs was marked on our itinerary in large letters and "double-starred" according to Baedeker's helpful system. So we devoted our last day in Tampa to the rounding out of our schedule. Tarpon is twenty-five miles north of Tampa; we could do little more than check it off our list and then boast forever afterwards, like the Yankee tripper who "does" Venice in an hour, that we had been there. The hotel advertised motors for hire and held out the promise of "chauffeurs in uniform." But they cheated us—or else I am under a misapprehension as to what a uniform is. For the driver of the car we hired for the trip to Tarpon was wearing a plaid cap (a Scotch plaid which had undergone a sea-change), a pea-green overcoat and yellow shoes. A very broad smile and a lovely Southern accent went with the uniform. I would have gone miles to hear him say

THE HOTEL AND ITS GARDENS WERE ALLURING

"gy-arden" and "cyah." He warned us that there was a "powerful bad piece of road" to negotiate on the way to Tarpon; the main road was under repair and a détour of a mile and a half had been cut around it through the woods. He wasn't perfectly sure that we could get through, but he was "spo't" enough to try. So we left early in the morning when Tampa and the alluring gardens were still wrapped in a thick mist.

For a long time spatters of rain stung our cheeks. But the driver assured us that it would clear, partly because he was an optimist and partly because he was in deadly fear that we would turn back. His spo'ting instinct yearned to tackle the détour.

Promptly at ten o'clock, as if a mysterious stage manager had rung up the curtain on the pageant of Florida, the fog broke away before the sun and retreated helter-skelter, in platoons and brigades of little clouds, down behind the horizon. We were left under an arch of transparent sky, immaculately blue and clear. The shell road was so flat and flawless that we began to doubt that "powerful bad" stretch further on. It ran as straight as the Appian Way, narrowing in perspective as far as the eye could reach through a sparse forest of long-leaf pine. The

air was fragrant with the smoke of little fires that burned slowly through the underbrush, and a blue haze drifted close to the ground like a veil flung across the vivid green of the palmetto scrub. We passed groups of negroes who rolled their eyes at us as we flashed by; occasionally a white farmer in a one-horse buggy trotted past on his way to town. But most of the road was deserted save for a scurrying quail or a lonely cow standing knee-deep in the swampy ditches, or a majestic, wide-winged buzzard hanging motionless just over our heads. Apparently no one else was going to Tarpon Springs. We soon discovered why.

The road stopped and an impudent sign labelled "Détour" directed us into what looked like an impassable bog. The driver turned to us with a beaming smile. "Hold on," he said, with a spo'ting light in his eye, "for I reckon you'll need to."

We plunged into a ditch, roared up a bank on the other side and leaped headlong into a swamp. The car, taken by surprise, coughed and spluttered and careened like a ship in mid-channel. We slithered and skidded in mud, climbed over logs, wriggled under fallen trees. The back of the driver's neck got a shade redder, but he whistled courageously. Allan and I

clung on with both hands and were racked bone by bone like heretics in a torture chamber; my hat blew off, my hair came down and there was a pool of hairpins in my lap. In the midst of the ordeal, when the only endurable alternative seemed to be unconsciousness, we came out into a wide clearing.

"This is Oldsmar," the driver explained, and added, with a touch of awe in his voice, "the Oldsmobile man's Oldsmar."

The automobile man had bought a large slice of land between Tampa and Tarpon Springs and had planned an agricultural "community." Work in the new town was going on at top speed when we were there. They were building a hotel for imaginary tourists, a garage for visionary automobiles, and stores for merchants who may and may not occupy them. Plots were being staked off in the cleared spaces for future householders, farms were being apportioned and engines were already puffing up and down the single-track railway, busy and important, blowing big steam rings up above the green tops of the tranquil pines. We passed through Madison Avenue and State Street, both more or less obstructed by bottomless puddles, tree stumps and tenacious weeds, and somewhere on one of Oldsmar's spacious boulevards the car became so

discouraged that the rear wheel refused to go around. The driver made a gingerly decent and lured us forward again by plucking a handful of palmetto and strewing it before the car like Sir Walter spreading his cloak before Elizabeth.

How would it feel, I wonder, to own a slice of Florida and, like a genii rubbing a magic lamp, to say: "This shall be a town. These forests shall be fields. Here a house. There an orchard." And when it has all sprung into existence, to stock the farms with pigs, horses, chickens and cows. Presto! An orange tree in bloom, a garden already springing through the rich earth, perhaps a kettle on the hearth. How would it feel, I wonder, to say: "Here is your farm, you homeseeker—wherever you are. For so much and so much, you may buy this little Arcadia, ready made and guaranteed to fit."

We were glad that the détour had led us through the miracle. The asphalt pavement in the heart of the pine forest was poignant because it was put there for hypothetical passers-by who might never pass. Speculating in communities! For that, Mr. Olds, you prove that there is still a faint belief in men's heart, enough hankering for the El Dorado to gamble on.

We finally bounced out of the détour and rejoined the road—oh, the lovely, smooth white road! And then it was straight-away to Tarpon, breezy and fast, with the motor purring and the highway unfurling like a ribbon. The forest thinned; we came to clearings and to orange and grapefruit groves—globes of gold that bore the branches down to the ground. For the first time we saw the Gulf of Mexico scalloping into the land with an endless pattern of little bays and inlets, shallow water glittering under the high sun and lapping the sandy shore with myriad, exact ripples, fluted and exhaustless. It was like a setting for a Conrad story, very remote and tropical, suggestive of the grim struggles of the spirit that go on against a background of cloudless sky, breathless heat, and lonely, palm-fringed beaches.

A golf-links and some very fashionable people, tweeded and caddied, warned us that we were drawing near Tarpon Springs. So we stopped, while I retrieved some of the hairpins, tucked up my bang and put on my hat. The friendly driver was so frankly interested in my vanity-box that I stopped short with the powder puff in mid-air and ordered him to go on, and we roared into Tarpon with the puff in action, to the vociferous astonishment of some pickanin-

nies on a fence who had never seen a lady "whitening" herself.

People who go to Tarpon Springs go there to fish, or to play golf, or to sail, or to be simply dreamy, for there is a lazy enchantment about the place which is very insidious. A few of them, like us, make the sponge-fleet an excuse. We left the pretty bungalows and the neat main street of the town, and went at once to Greek Town on the Anclote River.

Sponge fishermen, for some inexplicable reason that I am unable to explain, are always Greeks. Off the coast of Tripoli, in British Honduras, in Key West and here at Tarpon Springs, Greeks, and only Greeks, pursue the tenacious sponge. Their calling, like the Murano glass-blowers', may be handed down from father to son, a sort of hereditary talent. At any rate, the fleet at Tarpon is manned entirely by Greeks, although the "catch" is sold to American buyers. And Greeks colour the place as distinctively as the Spaniards tinge Tampa with their fiery Latinism. The Greek language is spoken everywhere in the streets and decorates shop-signs, bill-boards and restaurant bills-of-fare.

The fleet leaves port for cruises which last from two to five months, according to the weath-

er and the size of the "catch." "Over a million dollars' worth of business a year" is the remarkable record of the sponge industry at Tarpon Springs. It used to be the custom to grapple for the sponges with long poles, pronged at the tip like a pitchfork. But to-day every sponge-boat carries one or two expert divers who go down in very deep water, often to the depth of a hundred and twenty feet, and tear the tenacious growth away from the rocks. Each schooner is accompanied by a smaller diving-boat which is moored alongside like a baby snuggling against its mother. The divers make their descents from the low, broad decks of the smaller boats, carrying a net and the three-pronged grappler and wearing the ponderous and grotesque helmet and the unwieldy suit of a deep-sea diver. Their life is spent in the flickering half-light of that weird world at the bottom of the ocean. They struggle against the treacherous currents and implacable tides; they walk in coral gardens, through groves of feathery sea-weed and tall grass which waves rhythmically to the pulse of the sea; they know all the mysteries of the ocean—bulbous fish, ogling and wide-lipped sharks, the hideous octopus, jelly-fish, transparent, opalescent and motionless. The treasure they are in search of clings to the coral

formations, to rocks, to the fluted sand-bottom. Some of the sponges are as flat and widespread as geranium leaves, some of them grow in fat clusters like gigantic golden grapes, some of them are shaped like fungi, and as porous as a honeycomb. The diver, bracing himself against the tugging currents, pries the growth loose with his grappler and fills his net. It is dangerous and exhausting work. We saw several men along the waterfront at Tarpon who walked with the utmost difficulty, dragging their legs and twisting grotesquely in their efforts to put one foot before the other. They told us that they had been attacked by "diver's paralysis." They still made descents, and they assured us that they could walk without any difficulty under water, which is, after all, their accustomed element. Free of the enormous pressure and safe and dry on land, they suffered like gasping fish.

The fishermen were an exuberant, cheerful lot, well-built and handsome, brown of skin, black-haired, blue-eyed and sturdy. They walked with a swagger, swaying from the hips. Some of them were barefooted but none of them was bareheaded—they crowned the classicism of their Greek profiles with checkered caps and battered straw hats. One of them, like a glorified Charlie Chaplin, had a number two derby

atop a wild mop of black curls. Sartorially they ran to gaudy shirts and screaming neckties —and we blessed them just for that.

"Photograph" is the international esperanto for friendliness. Wherever we pointed the camera a dozen Greeks leaped to get into the picture. They posed for us like self-conscious effigies, all in a row with cast-iron grins, their feet turned out and a curl of black hair pulled down across their eyes like a Coster's forelock

I was glad that they had given their boats Greek names for the most part. Although "Charm" and "Kilkis" and "Three Brothers" do very well for Gloucester fishermen, the Greek alphabet, when it spells ΧΑΔΚΗ decorates a prow as delicately as a scroll of flowers. Could anything be lovelier than ΑΓ. ΓΕΟΡΓΟΣ?

The Greeks had their own coffee-houses and restaurants all along the water-front, and there were one or two shops where you could buy sponge fragments, shells, alligator's teeth, coral branches, frail sea anemones, delicate starfish, postcards or a bunch of green bananas and a package of Zu-Zus!

A young Greek hailed us from the porch of one of the coffee-houses.

"Hey, you!" he shouted, with a flashing smile. "Take my picture with this here pipe."

This here—or should I say that there?—pipe was a large hubble-bubble. He had curled his bare toes around the bottle, the long tube was in his mouth and clouds of blue smoke rocketed skyward. We took the photograph, even though the young Greek was sitting in a Stygian shadow. Nothing appeared on the developed film but a bottle and ten toes. Instead of a peaceful *genre*, we had photographed what looked like the fevered imaginings of a spiritual séance. There were the disembodied pedal extremities of a Greek grasping a crystal sphere—and nothing else!

But the sunny wharves and the dazzling fleet held us outside. It was like the Marina Grande at Capri, Palermo and Trieste and rolled into one. It was gaudy, it was theatrical, it was amazingly beautiful! Wouldn't you have been bewildered if you had come upon a mirage of the Mediterranean in Florida—only right-side up and tangible?

The Greeks had had their "Cross day" or Epiphany celebration the day before; the whole fleet was in port and all the streets were decorated with flowers, bunting, and the Greek and American flags intertwined. There had been a three-hour service at the Greek Church which we had missed and can never forgive ourselves

THE GREEKS HAD SAID THEIR PRAYERS AND WERE AT WORK AGAIN

for missing. There had been prayer, songs and incense. Fifteen hundred Greeks had crowded the little church at Tarpon to stand during the whole impressive service from eight o'clock until eleven. A great basin of water had been blessed and there had been a mad scramble to dip it up in cups, pitchers, jugs and bottles, and to carry a drop or two away. There had been a solemn procession through the streets to the water's edge at Spring Bayou, where the priest, standing under a canopy, had prayed and then, with all his strength, had flung a cross out into the water. Dozens of young Greeks had plunged in after it. One of them, stronger, pluckier, more desirous perhaps than the rest, had come up with the glittering cross in his hands. He had held it high above his head for the crowd on the bank to see. They had cheered him and his heart had been bursting with pride and happiness. . . . It was bad enough to have missed it, but to be told about it heaped coals of regret on my head.

Now, in the blazing white morning, the ships lay side by side in an intricate confusion, some in the river, some drawn up on the beach, others lifted high and dry on land and propped up with blocks and beams. The Greeks had said their prayers and were at work again, coiling ropes, mending nets, painting, staggering aboard their

little schooners under heavy boxes of provisions, sorting sponges. . . . Greeks, praise God, love blue! Along the wharves that glittering morning there were ships painted blue from stern to bow, ships with blue masts, ships with blue bowsprits. They had scarlet keels and decorative friezes painted on their sides in orange and black—crude designs of extraordinary beauty. Their blunt noses were piled with sponges, fruits, tawny sails, anchors, coils of rope, divers' helmets and vegetables. Spar and chains, bowsprits and masts tangled everywhere. It was the most dazzling confusion, the most magnificent bedlam!

We stayed until the sun slanted low across the river, rimming the myriad tipping masts with a fiery glitter. Then we turned reluctantly away to the hired motor because the friendly driver had warned us for the tenth time that it was growing late and that there was a "powerful bad piece of road. . . ."

CHAPTER IX

'WAY DOWN IN PENSACOLA, SEAPLANES, SUBMARINES, AND LUNCH WITH AN ADMIRAL, WITH A STORM AS AN ANTI-CLIMAX

ALL I knew about Pensacola, before I went there, was gleaned from a musical comedy song:

'Way down in Pensacola
We'll wander where the palms grow.
You'll find there's nothing to do
But fool those Florida ladies!

Not poetry, of course—but illuminating history! Nothing to do but fool the ladies! I was still in knee-skirts when I heard the song, but I can remember the chorus girl who sang it, greatly assisted by her ankles, against a blazing stage-setting of palms and unnaturally blue sky. From that moment, if I thought of Pensacola at all, I thought of it as a tropical rest-cure where tired sailors did nothing all day long but fool Florida ladies. And somehow I could not shake off the conviction. When we arrived

there after a hot, dusty journey from Jacksonville, I expected to find myself in a great grove of cocoanut palms. I expected to see hammocks swinging lazily in a steady trade wind and sailors in white duck snuggling up to dusky belles. I expected to see Urbanesque cannibals sporting on glittering beaches and Winter Garden chorus girls fox-trotting in the calcium moonlight.

Instead, I found a busy little city which looked, at first glance, like any other little city—but no taxi-cabs. We stood on the sidewalk with our luggage piled around us and hailed nocturnal Ford riders with no success. They bounced on and ignored our frantic signals, while all the other travellers who had come to Pensacola on our train shouldered their own baggage and went away on foot. We might have been waiting there now if a policeman hadn't offered to "step down to the corner" and telephone for a taxi. I found myself wondering what would happen to me if, in a moment of abstraction, I should ask a New York policeman to kindly step into the nearest pay-station and "call me a black and white." The obliging Pensacolan officer, who looked like an admiral in his long coat and acres of gold braid, hurried briskly away on his charitable errand as if being a knight to travellers in distress was one of his accustomed duties.

The taxi-cab, summoned by the law and arriving in a frantic hurry on two wheels, took us along a neat boulevard to an overgrown hotel on Palafox Street. It is known as the San Carlos and has a slightly Waldorfian manner, going in rather too extravagantly for marble pillars, palms, gold and gilt, steam heat, page boys, telephone girls, lounges, cigar stands, express elevators, and sky-scraper proportions. It did not seem possible that there could be a great enough floating population in Pensacola to warrant the magnificence of its hotel. It was built, we were told, during Pensacola's "boom," ten or twelve years ago, when the inhabitants of the little "deep-water city" were shouting themselves hoarse about her miraculous growth and equally miraculous future. At that time superlatives ceased to be conversational olives and got to be the bread and butter of daily speech. A "reasonable amount" of hotel wouldn't do for a city that was destined to be a "largest port," a naval station, a manufacturing centre and a fashionable resort all rolled into one. So the towering San Carlos rose above Pensacola like a lonely mountain peak in the centre of a desert, a target for windstorms and a symbol of the future. Fortunately for Pensacola, the "boom" gradually lost strength, like a petted kitten expiring under

indiscriminate caresses, and the city escaped that devastating "bigness" which would have transformed her from a lovable town into a belching monster, blighted by factories, disfigured by skyscrapers and utterly spoiled by riches.

We opened our windows as soon as a sleepy bellboy had deposited our luggage and had gleaned a quarter for his pains. Then we hung on the window-sill and sniffed the moist night air, and stared down into the foreshortened street five stories below. Little Ford cars, like busy, shiny beetles, bustled up and down, squawking and pretending that Main—excuse me, I mean Palafox Street—was Broadway. Bustle and hurry, a sort of showy and Northern progressiveness, had stamped itself on the town. The shops blazed, a Movie Theatre ejected a black stream of chattering "fans," trolley-cars clattered back and forth. And yet the wind was indescribably sweet and soft, and came straight from the Gulf across the tasselled tips of the encroaching pine forest. We felt the lazy enchantment of the Southern night and wondered at the liveliness of the Pensacolans in the street.

Long after we had gone to bed the noisy crowd kept us awake. A knot of negro loungers on the corner talked until three o'clock. Their bub-

bling laughter and the incessant Ford squawks were my lullaby.

Yet I suppose it is only reasonable that the inhabitants of a city which has passed thirteen times from one government to another should be restless, volatile and animated. They have never been allowed to settle down long enough to become inoculated by the Florida languor, and now it is too late to begin. One wouldn't inherit a languid temperament from ancestors who changed flags as glibly as we change collars and who alternately succumbed to French, Spanish and British rule, adopting a new nationality so often that, with the chameleon who was put on a piece of Scotch plaid, they must have "busted" more than once with the effort of taking on so many colours. The Pensacolans have just begun to breathe again after a reckless and unstable history. No wonder that having survived such a past, they throw out their chests and tell the stranger that Pensacola is a miniature Paradise —the deepest harbour, the best climate, the purest water, the boldest men, the finest women, and, mind you, the oldest city in the United States!

"How's that?" you say, pricking up your ears, because you think you've caught me. "Doesn't St. Augustine wear *that* crown?"

Not at all! Pensacola was discovered by Don Tristan de Luna four years before St. Augustine, with malicious intention, first began to be the oldest city and to beguile the lives of settlers and the dollars of tourists. You probably wonder why Pensacola has neglected to advertise her distinction, scattering pamphlets broadcast to lure the tripper who can't pursue antiquity in Europe and has begun to search desperately for it nearer home.

There is a reason for Pensacola's reticence, a fly in the ointment, a blot on the 'scutcheon. St. Augustine, first settled in 1565, was permanently established and its history has been in the making ever since. But de Luna abandoned Pensacola, its deep harbour and snow-white beaches two years after his landing there, and it was not until d'Ariola appeared, one hundred and fifty years later, that a permanent colony was established. It remained Spanish until the ambitious overlords of New Orleans, Iberville and Bienville, caught sight of it, and then for forty-four years Pensacola changed hands like a thieves' booty. The inhabitants saluted the French flag at sunset and pulled a humble forelock to the Spanish flag at dawn. It was inconvenient and confusing, but no one could complain of a lack of variety in life!

Then the British, who have a neat habit of getting between belligerents and in settling a quarrel obtaining the cause of it, captured Pensacola for their own and made it the capital of British West Florida. It became very fashionable and the headquarters of a flourishing Indian trade under the direction of the shrewd and intelligent half-breed, Alexander McGillivray, who was chief of the Creeks. As far north as the Tennessee River and as far east as England and Scotland, the threads of Pensacola's commerce linked her with the rest of the world. Rich Mr. Panton, a London merchant, built a trading post and a mansion in the town, and for a while the manners and fancies of England were aped by the settlers. The village, which consisted of "40 huts, thatched with palmetto leaves" when the British took possession, was enlarged and squared off into streets and boulevards, forts were built, and the inhabitants were beginning to believe that the Union Jack was their honest-to-goodness symbol of authority when Galvez, the Governor of Spanish Louisiana, snatched the town back again for Spain. The Pensacolans probably dug up their Spanish grammars and forgot English—at least in public. It is easy to see why all the streets were rechristened.

George street became Palafox, and other Anglo-Saxon names gave way to Saragossa, Baylen Romana, Barcelona and Tarragona, putting a Spanish imprint on what is, after all, a British town.

Andrew Jackson was the last to dip his finger into this international mince-pie, and falling into the historical habit, he dipped it in, not once, but twice. First he drove out the British who were profiting by the lax Spanish rule to incite the Indians against the brand-new United States up north; then, with divine Yankee impartiality he turned about and disciplined the Spaniards for doing the same thing. And finally, when Florida was ceded to the United States in 1821, Pensacola became the seat of the provisional military government for ten months, and wound up her checkered career in a blaze of rather temporary but dazzling glory.

Is it any wonder that excitement and novelty have become a habit? I hope that Pensacolans will forgive me, but it seemed to me that they are fond of a good time, and it would be a pity if they were ashamed of the nicest thing about them. They like to dance, they like to play golf, sail, swim and fish; they like to flirt and to go up in aeroplanes. The women are well-dressed, for heaven knows there is an audience

for them! I was dazzled, on going down to dinner at the San Carlos, to see ornamental ladies slippered in silver and gold, diaphanous with tulle, coiffed with imagination, and bearing no single earmark of the provincial. They were brides, most of them, Army and Navy brides. Their red-cheeked, clean-cut young husbands were either attached to the submarine flotilla or stationed at Fort Pickens or in training at the Naval Aeronautic Station.

Their presence explained why Hudson Maxim's "Defenseless America" has taken the place of Gideon's Bibles in every room in the San Carlos Hotel! There is no danger of a pacifist going to bed in Pensacola with Christian ideas of unpreparedness obstructing his intelligence. Pensacola has a navy yard, a flying school and a fort, and there is a purposeful concentration on the black and whiteness of our national unpreparedness—the black to stand for what has not been done yet, the white to mean what is being done and will be done, in spite of a nation lulled to pacifism by waiting too long to fight, in spite of the devilish obtuseness of authorities, in spite of delays, discouragements and rebuffs. The pacifist at the San Carlos who looks for his comforting Bible, hoping to misinterpret it before he lays him down to sleep, finds "Defense-

less America" bound in red, terrifying, disturbing and prophetic, to throw him into nightmarish slumber. I have never seen a Gideon Bible which looked as if it might have been read, but the Hudson Maxim high explosive in my room was thumbed threadbare. (If you can mix metaphors like that!) I think the revelation shook my faith in spirituality a trifle, but it cheered me to think that perhaps a few sparks of high purpose had been struck in the turning of those pages. At any rate, the book was the first indication we had that the peace-dove is unpopular at Pensacola. The bird which draws all eyes, down there, is a man-made monster, lighter than a breath, wide-winged. . . .

But before we glance up into the unnatural blue of the Florida sky (I say that instinctively, for the sky was not blue at all, but glaring white like the inside of a crystal goblet!)—before we glance up, I say, at the war-birds, let us focus on Pensacola herself.

With Julian Street, Théophile Gautier, Arthur Symons and other delightful celebrities who set the fashion in similes, I always think of cities as ladies—languorous ladies or bold ones or merely stupid wenches with no beauty and no brains. Pensacola is the most dangerous sort of

flirt. She basks in the warm sun and gentle wind for months at a time; fogs drift in from the Gulf and veil her bewitchingly; she is tender and sleepy by starlight, frivolous in the morning —but always she is lovable. Nearly always! She will turn like a fury and smash and destroy and annihilate when it pleases her. Then violent winds sweep across the city, lifting off roofs, snapping trees in two and, as one Pensacolan said to me, "scaring the *tar* out of everybody!" A city whose parlour tricks are so maliciously unexpected is tinged, for me, at least, with something sinister and untrustworthy. When she is doing her best to bewitch me, I keep my eye on the rosy-hued cumuli banking low on the horizon and building towers and pinnacles that may rise and obscure the smiling sun. When the palm-fronds hang limp and still in the breathless quiet of the hot afternoons, I think of them torn by the wind into writhing pinwheels, lashed, tortured and drenched. Somewhere in my subconscious mind, I am suspicious and watchful.

So the Pensacolans must be, for they have built their houses as close to the ground as possible. The frail wooden shacks along the waterfront look as if they could be flipped away by the wind as easily as a pedestrian's straw hat;

some of them, buffeted by the terrific storms of July and September, 1916, lean drunkenly, and there are picket fences everywhere which have fallen flat on their faces and look as if they meant to stay there, like refractory children. Living in the shadow of such an inexorable fate —for even optimism and the enthusiasm of capitalists have failed to stop the Gulf storms —makes the people livelier than ever. Like Neapolitans, they enjoy living to-day because it is not altogether improbable that they will be blown to smithereens to-morrow. The surest way to enjoy life is to go where nature values it lightly. I have never appreciated the gift of mere existence more poignantly than I did when an earthquake nearly deprived me of it. In that violent moment I would have snatched the dull routine of endless days out of the jaws of hell to treasure forever! In Pensacola they have learned that lesson. They trust to luck, live close to the ground, and smile. . . .

At night Palafox Street is crowded, riff-raff and gentry mixing and apparently liking it. A steady tide of pedestrians drifts up and down the narrow sidewalks or answers the lure (at ten cents a lure) of the Movie Theatres, or goes to the "Zoo" to stare at an exhibition of moth-eaten snakes and odoriferous trained bears, or

takes a shot at a disappearing target in one of the clattering shooting galleries on the chance of being sober and steady enough to win a nickel cigar. Hawkers yell hoarse invitations; you catch the alluring tinkle of a distant piano playing syncopated melodies for dancing sailors; the busy little Fords rush up and down always pretending that it is Broadway. If you are a country cousin you stare into Kress's windows and admire tinware, ribbon, five-cent lace and ten-cent calico, pressed glass, lemon squeezers, chromos and clocks. The crowd is colourful and picturesque. There are husky young sailors walking in bashful pairs like Italian *carabinieri;* there are longshoremen, big-handed Swedes, taciturn Englishmen, voluble Italians, niggers and more niggers—tall ones with little bullet heads and flat noses, lanky ones laughing liquid contagious laughter, yellow ones and sooty ones, jaunty, cheap coons and ragged coons; negresses with feathers in their hats and white kid shoes; likable fat negresses in inconceivable tatters; untidy, down-at-the-heel people and trim officers in khaki, marines, Cubans, Japanese, pretty girls, tourists, the tag-ends of humanity and the show-room pieces, drunks, riff-raff and jetsam.

In the Movie Theatres there are close-packed

perspiring audiences and sobbing organ music —"I Hear You Calling Me" on the *vox humana!* Babies, who should have been in bed for hours, squawk and squall and bubble; sailors giggle and middle-aged citizens watch gravely, reading the captions aloud.

But beyond Palafox Street, the rest of the city is dark and quiet. You can walk for blocks and hear nothing but the ghostly rattle of the palms, see nothing but sober, sedate houses and discreet clubs. Architecturally, Pensacola is not exciting except for a little Spanish baroque church which may be new but which looks as old as the world. Most of the houses and all of the business buildings were apparently planned according to the deadly American system of usefulness before beauty, without regard for the landscape, the colour of the sky or the permanence of anything. Sometimes I wonder why we do not regulate civic architecture by law. To encounter rows and rows of ugly houses built in the jig-saw manner and painted a dingy grey or a sulphurish and sickening yellow, is cramping to the soul. But to encounter them in Western Florida is both humiliating and tragic.

All roads led to the Navy Yard, so we motored out there one morning, Allan warning the hotel garage that he didn't want a Ford, wouldn't have

a Ford, the garage bridling and sending us a fashionable relic that rode high on buoyant springs. We sat in the lofty and slippery tonneau and rattled loosely like beans in a pod. Any slight variation in the surface of the road, like a blade of grass or a pebble, bounced us skyward. Fortunately, the road was macadamised except for one stretch, just across the long wooden bridge over the Bayou Grande, where some niggers, three mules and a ponderous steam-roller had created a No-Man's Land with the mistaken intention of repairing the road. We were constantly in mid-air while we negotiated the craters, so I have a blurred impression of the cross-country approach to the Yard. And I found out later that we could have gone quite comfortably and cheaply by tram from the centre of the city.

We went first to the old Civil War ruin, Barancas, and left the car to climb up into the fort and from its high walls to fix the plan of the Bay in our mind's retina. We crossed a wooden portcullis that bridged a shallow moat and entered the fort through a steep underground passageway, coming out by the spiny tower of the Government wireless station. A lonely boy in khaki was on guard-duty there, looking as if he would have welcomed a stiff hand-to-hand

fight with almost any variety of enemy—but a ferocious one preferred. I suppose soldiers do grow tired, now and then, of what is for the most part a hypothetical profession. We tried to cheer this one by talking in a hopeful way of the lively possibility of war with Germany. He brightened, but he let us see very plainly that he had heard the cry of "Wolf!" too many times to take our feeble pipings seriously.

We leaned on the wall by his side and stared out at the Bay. It enters obligingly through a narrow mouth so that modern Fort Pickens, on the tip of Santa Rosa Island, dominates it easily. Then it widens back ten miles to Pensacola, and still further on splits like a scorpion's tail into two smaller bays, Escambia and St. Mary de Galvez. Santa Rosa Island, a narrow sand-strip forty-four miles long, locks the harbour away from the Gulf. Fort Pickens, the mortar battery and quarantine are all out there, and curious tourists have to be ferried across from the mainland. I am a layman and know nothing of these things, but it seemed to me a very inconvenient arrangement of fort and barracks —the fort on an island, the barracks on the mainland and a wide strip of harbour between exposed to the fire of enemy ships lying just across that narrow bar of sand. I had an un-

easy feeling that if Pickens were surprised at night, or when the defenders were having afternoon tea ashore, getting to the fort would be a blighting business. Apparently, all of those things had been thought out long before I got to Pensacola, for when I put my fear into words the fresh-cheeked boy in khaki became hysterical.

To change the subject, I asked him why Pensacola is called the "Deep Water City." He controlled his expression long enough to answer, "Because the harbour channel is thirty feet deep on zero tide," and then leaned against one corner of the wireless tower and laughed until he cried.

The brick walls of Barancas rise steeply from the grey ruins of the old Media de Luna, the half-moon fort built by d'Ariola in 1696. While Allan sketched the curious, shallow defences and the incomparably white beach which curves beyond them, I watched some small boys playing at mediæval warfare, two of them barricaded in the fort, the rest swarming with bloodthirsty howls (if three very small boys can be said to swarm) over the crescent-shaped walls.

When the sketch was finished we said goodbye, I rather stiffly, to the very young soldier, and went back to the car. As we bounced on

we saw a great white bird—not the dove of peace—suddenly thrust its nose skyward and with widespread wings wheel and dip over the glittering harbour.

The Yard and the aeronautic station are halfway between the entrance to the Bay and Pensacola, facing Santa Rosa Island across the wide strip of water. A sentry deprived us of our camera at the gate, but didn't insist on our being blindfolded, which seemed rather inconsistent considering the accuracy of optic photography. A real spy doesn't fix a tripod on the periscope of a submarine and prance about taking photographs in full view of officers and crew. Nor does he spread his maps and foul plans on the parade-ground of a Navy Yard for the amusement of nursemaids and babies in perambulators. Our idea of a spy is one who surrenders his camera at the gate, swaps a yarn with the sentry, and then saunters leisurely about puffing a cigarette and endearing himself to every one from the Commandant to the Admiral's pet dog—such an artless, winning creature that no one can resist telling him everything he wants to know, leading him everywhere he wants to go. And all the while he looks and looks and sees and sees. . . .

The Navy Yard at Pensacola encloses both

A GREAT FLOATING HANGAR, TRULY MAGNIFICENT IN PROPORTION

the naval and aeronautic stations. When we were there, all traces of the destructive July and September storms had been wiped out. Except for the wharves, which had not been rebuilt, things were in spick-and-span condition. The hangars and machine shops are near the water and connected with it by wide concrete "beaches," so that the machines can be wheeled out of the sheds and floated, if I may put it that way, at their own front door. The offices and quarters are further back—all square, white, unbeautiful buildings. And there are the usual patches of discouraged grass and shiny mounds of cannon balls. In the harbour out beyond, the *Columbia,* the *Tallahassee* and the *McDonough* were "mothering" little strings of almost invisible submarines. From the top of what looked like a battleship's skeleton mast a signal flag announced "Flying to-day." And the air was full of the mysterious and unfamiliar hum of giant wings. We felt that we were in the midst of a very important and vital activity, for the men who are developing naval aeronautics at Pensacola are carrying on experiments which make them the focus of national attention.

As soon as I passed the Yard gate I began to ask questions, remembering what I had been

told before I left New York: "Find out what they are doing down in Pensacola. Find out how they are doing it. We may be going to have a war, you know." I had not forgotten. I faced the Commandant in his office and, pretending that I was a composite American, rather put it up to him.

"Well," I said, fixing him with my composite gaze, "what *are* you doing down here?"

Instead of taking me by the scruff of my neck and putting my composite person outside the door, the Commandant answered very seriously with another question, "Do you really want to know?"

"I do."

"How much do you know already?"

"Nothing." Which wasn't exactly composite, but was at least honest.

The Commandant smiled and commissioned a patient aviator to show us over the Yard and to explain everything lucidly and repeatedly. The aviator told us, among other things, that the school at Pensacola is the only one in the United States for the training of officers and men in the naval aeronautic service. This was in February, 1917, and the school was working to the limit of its capacity, with full classes not only of naval and marine officers and men, but

naval militia and coast-guard officers and men who are received every three months. Thirteen lieutenants (junior grade), one lieutenant, two marine corps captains and an ensign—seventeen men in all—were in training. There were only five senior flight instructors. Considering that other first-class powers have from two thousand to ten thousand aviators, and that there were less than two hundred trained aviators in the United States Army and Navy at that time, it is easy to see that such slow training of personnel and instructors has held back progress in the building of the national aeronautic service. The need is not so much to get more aircraft, but to equip men to handle them. And for every anxious question of mine, the patient aviator had one answer, "Universal training! When we have universal training, the problem of men and instructors will be solved. In the meantime, the aeronautic station at Pensacola is going ahead as fast as it can. As fast, remember, as it can!"

In working with the fleet, naval aircraft have four distinct, invaluable duties—to scout from ships at sea, to scout off shore from coastal stations, to "spot" and to engage in offensive operations against enemy 'planes or against enemy ships and stations. There, and on the first line of defence, they are of inestimable value. Eng-

land had not been slow to realise, to quote Mr. Balfour, that "the time is here when command of the sea will be of no value to Great Britain without corresponding command of the air." And Lord Charles Beresford made an even stronger statement when he said that "the time is here when the air-service of Great Britain will be more vital for her safety than her Army and her Navy combined." General Petain has said, "I see France in the near future with fifty thousand aeroplanes." And Rear-Admiral Peary states that "if we are to have a real defence we must begin developing our aerial strength now and push it unsparingly. We shall not have started on a proper pace of development of this vital arm until we are spending not less than fifty million dollars a year."

As I trotted at the heels of the communicative aviator at Pensacola, he explained to me bitterly and explicitly why America is so overwhelmingly outclassed by Europe in the matters of naval aeronautics. He told me, among other things, that there was not a single anti-aircraft unit in the United States. Up to that time there had been no practice in the handling of aeroplane guns at Pensacola, nor had a single gun been mounted on an aeroplane. There had been no practice in locating submarines, torpedoes

and mines. Again lack of men and material! There was only one kite balloon, the "aerial eye" of the forts and field artillery batteries, in the United States, nor were there any small dirigible balloons for coast patrol and submarine hunting.

"And do you remember," the aviator said, "that it was a Zeppelin which secured co-operation for the German fleet at the battle of Jutland, and that the British fleet was warned of the approach of the Germans by an aeroplane piloted by Flight Lieutenant Rutland from the aeroplane mother ship *Engadine?* Did you know that only two of our ships, the *Seattle* and the *North Carolina,* are equipped with seaplanes and the catapult launching device which permits scouting away from the shore station?"

I did not know. And it had to be explained to me that the "catapult" is a pneumatic ram which gives the seaplane the necessary velocity to leave the stern of the ship and to take the air. But it was hard for me to believe that the development of the seaplane in America has been anything but miraculous, when I saw the machines in the hangars and in the sky at Pensacola. It was hard to be pessimistic, even though the war-cloud was hanging low over the country, in the presence of so much activity and genu-

ine enthusiasm. We went into the hangars, where there were twenty-five little Curtiss school machines with flirty tails, two Thomas aeroplanes that looked like blunt-nosed dragon-flies, a Martin, five big Sturtevants, a "scouting" Curtiss, a three hundred horse-power Gallaudet with the drivers' seats far forward so that the pilots ride like seasprites on a dolphin's nose, four Burgesses and a Navy type, designed by Naval Constructor H. C. Richardson. Another Navy type, a school machine, designed by Lieutenant E. O. McDonnell, was in the process of construction.

I was allowed to go close to the beautiful monsters while they were being "curried" by mechanics, and even to put my hand on their polished sides and to touch the tips of their outspread wings. Each one had its "record." This one had always been a "Jonah," that one had made an altitude record; this one, with Lieutenant McIlvaine, had been lost in the fog the day before and for nine hours had drifted like a lame duck on Pensacola Bay. Some of them had settled on their tails like those fragile flies whose front legs are out of all proportion to their hind legs. They reared their noses heavenward. The motors were silent, and the devoted mechanics, aeronautic grooms, polished and

rubbed and did mysterious, deeply intelligent things with the complex, delicate veins and arteries that move the inert body with pulsating life and lift it out of the water to the topmost skies.

The aviator told me that a student's first flight without the instructor proves his sense of balance and determines whether or not he will be a successful pilot. He may do very well as long as he is not alone, but the "feel" of a machine is different when it carries only one passenger, and the result is confusing; so confusing, in fact, that the hopeful student, even if he escapes intact, is not always granted his pilot's degree and has to choose a more stationary branch of the service. It is not a question of intelligence or of personal courage, but depends rather on how good an equilibrist one happens to be.

"It is a magnificent sensation," the aviator told me, "to feel yourself actually flying, to see the earth and sea dropping away from under you, diminishing dizzily like sea and earth seen through the wrong end of a telescope. The world looks as flat and featureless as a pricked bubble—it just collapses. And there you are, absolutely not afraid, suspended in the air like a lazy buzzard coasting on the wind. More than anything else, it is freedom. You are alone

with the sky and the machine, and somehow the petty things of the world get left behind. I tell you," he assured me, fixing me with his eyes, "it's great! It gets into your blood."

It was a breathlessly calm day and there was an animated bustle along the broad glaring-white concrete water-front before the hangars. With the aviator, who had witnessed the spectacle more times than he could remember, we stood in the hot sun for over an hour to watch a long line of machines, suddenly shaken by astounding explosions, leap away from shore, skim the surface of the water for a few hundred yards and then rise steadily higher and higher into the sky. No matter how often the miracle was repeated, I was as excited as a child with a toy balloon. I had an uncontrollable desire to cheer, to clap, to flutter a handkerchief.

But a memory restrained me. Once in London I had been the only human being in an immense crowd to cheer King George. I was standing on the edge of the curb, firmly wedged from behind by a British mob and still more firmly wedged from before by a stolid and immovable line of British police. I had never seen a king. Once in Rome I had glimpsed the shiny *berretta* of Vittorio Emmanuele, who was apparently sitting on the

floor of his carriage as he drove in the Villa Borghese. But you could hardly call a *berretta* a whole king. It was quite a different matter in London, for the King was there to be seen, and I, with my chin resting on a Bobby's broad shoulder, waited only to see him. The great state coach rattled down the street slowly with a lumbersome, unwieldy majesty and pomp. Hats were lifted in respectful silence. I remember that my heart beat as the prancing horses came abreast. Then I caught sight of the familiar profile of the King, and something inexplicable and unrecognisable rose in me from the mysterious depths of my being. I had to cheer. So I cheered. My voice rose above the British silence, the British decorum, like an hysterical and blood-curdling Indian whoop. The King and several thousand people turned astonished eyes on me; the long row of policemen stiffened. Then the coach creaked and rattled past, turned at right angles into St. James, and the incident was closed. I had cheered. . . .

At Pensacola I suppressed the impulse sternly, for I could not have cheered aviators who take the glorious business of flying as unconcernedly as the English take the historical business of kings.

Mechanics wearing hip-length rubber boots splashed out into the shallow water to hold the machines in leash and to preserve the exact balance of the great wings while the pilots scrambled aboard. Then suddenly, with a staccato roar and a blinding shower of spray, they were off! Then they were clear of the water, skimming just above it with taut wings. Then up with a graceful swoop, up and up and still up —the sun glinting along the planes. They shot away from the beach one after the other until the sky was full of dipping, wheeling monsters. They poked their blunt noses straight at the sun, climbing until the throbbing of their engines came to us as faint as a pulse beat. They passed and repassed each other across the face of the blazing sky. They coasted down to the water again with subdued hums like heavy bumblebees swollen to nightmarish proportions.

Having likened them to every winged thing but the common house-fly, my superlatives sizzled off into speechlessness, and the aviator, greatly relieved, took me over to see the dirigible. It had just arrived and had been tied up in its kennel, looking very much like a long, yellow dachshund. It was squashy and soft to the prodding finger, and I was surprised to find myself on intimate terms with a dirigible

and saying that it felt like a "very old orange." As it is *the* dirigible, I was snubbed for being facetious and made to feel that I had taken liberties with a divinity. Yet I suppose Siegfried might have grown used to the dragon in time! The dirigible's kennel, to tell the truth, was more impressive—a great floating hangar, truly magnificent in proportion, which can be towed to sea and so turned with the wind that the dirigible is able to leave its shelter and to re-enter it with the utmost facility. Taking a dirigible to sea would be as exciting, it seems to me, as giving a dinotherium a ride in a swan boat!

We walked gingerly about the recumbent monster, stepping over ropes, chains and snake-like tubings, vaguely fearful in the unfamiliar atmosphere of making some misstep which would precipitate a calamity. The vast interior of the hangar was as cool and shadowy as a cathedral transept. Only where the great canvas curtains of the entrance were looped back, a patch of hot, noon sky blazed magnificently.

Friends "with the submarines" were expecting us for lunch, and we had been told that the Admiral's "barge" would be waiting for us at the Yard wharf to take us out to the *Columbia.* Already little chills of excitement were creep-

ing over me at the thought of having lunch with an admiral and an indefinite number of "other officers." While Allan and the aviator were examining the dirigible's car I slipped behind a convenient bulge in the creature's cigar-shaped anatomy, and squinting into a pocket mirror which is about the size of a fifty cent piece and just as successful in reflecting me, I powdered my nose and settled my hat at a more rakish angle. When I emerged looking, as Allan instantly remarked, like a whited sepulchre, it was time to go in search of the "barge." So we said good-bye to the patient aviator, insinuating a few last questions into our gratitude, and hurried away to keep our rendezvous at the wharf.

The "barge," of course, was a shining, brass-trimmed nifty horse-power motor-boat. It shot away from the Yard wharf, bearing us toward lunch with a delicious, exhilarating leap, cutting a path like the churning wake of an injured sperm-whale across the harbour. The soles of our feet tickled responsively to the shivering vibrations of the engine. We passed close to the rakish destroyer *McDonough* and had a blurred glimpse of a half a dozen submarines lying side by side and swarming with men. Overhead the great white birds still

circled and dipped, still coasted nose-down to the water or shot into the face of the sun. Real birds, white-breasted, hovered over the warships and wheeled in the wake of a big grey liner which steamed slowly towards the open sea. There was a gay flutter of flags,—brilliant spots of colour against the blue and white of the world. A magnificent activity everywhere—little spurts of grey smoke and the long wisps of dazzling steam snatched skyward and the glittering path of fast launches passing and repassing across the shining water. A submarine, like a thin, black pencil, detached itself from the others and moved slowly up the harbour, the crew walking along its narrow spine like men on a raft. Looking back, we could see the floating hangar and the blazing white of the Yard buildings. It was a fine moment. Before us lay a pageant of American preparedness on the sea and in the air, and we forgot carping criticisms, odious comparisons and doleful forebodings long enough to be proud of our country. The spectacle at Pensacola was both creditable and impressive. We find so much to depreciate in these days of preparation and anxiety that any real emotion, any thrill of genuine enthusiasm, is cause for rejoicing.

At lunch there was very little talk of war,

and that, I suppose, was as it should be. We spoke of the U-53, and the Admiral showed us some photographs of the crafty and daring undersea boat which he had had framed and hung on the walls of the mess room. I am wondering whether they are still there. I fancy they are, for there is nothing a good fighter admires more than a "sporting" enemy, and the U-53 was all of that.

We did not know that while we were enjoying the unaffected and delightful hospitality of the *Columbia,* word had been flashed all over the United States that Germany intended to carry on her submarine warfare. The Admiral and every one at the luncheon table but ourselves knew that the war-cloud had rolled up over the horizon and had spread like a menacing shadow over America. They knew that the dramatic spectacle of submarines, seaplanes and warships all about us was soon destined to become something more than a dramatic pageant. Yet our talk dealt pleasantly with other things. It was not until we got back to Pensacola, late that afternoon, that we found out for ourselves. Allan snatched a paper from a howling dervish of a newsboy who flashed by shrieking, "War Extra!" and we stood on the sidewalk to read

the glaring headlines. . . . It had come, then, and so soon!

That night, as if the news had stirred heaven and earth, a thunderstorm roared across the Gulf. The first blinding flash of lightning woke us. We heard thick splatters of rain, and a thunder clap which shook the San Carlos like an earthquake. Then the wind came, with a thin and querulous whine that rose in pitch, intensified, developed into a shriek. Chairs and tables on the open-air terrace down below turned over with a clatter. We heard bellboys and night watchmen scurrying back and forth to the rescue. Doors slammed and rattled, and the terrific impact of the wind drove the rain in solid sheets against our windows. I cowered under the bedclothes and called into the next room to Allan.

"Are you awake?"

"I am."

"What on earth is the time?"

He waited until the theatrical lightning had shown him the face of his watch.

"Four o'clock."

"Are we going to take the six o'clock train to Mobile?" I howled.

"If we're still alive."

Then we both crawled under our pillows and

tried to shut out the terrifying reverberations of the implacable wind. When we woke it was nine o'clock, and the sun was shining crisply. The thermometer had fallen to twenty-two degrees and the radiator was blowing steam bubbles in an unaccustomed effort to heat the San Carlos. We took a later train to Mobile, leaving Pensacola ashiver in the grip of an icy frost. But we were still alive.

CHAPTER X

A DAY IN MOBILE AND ON TO NEW ORLEANS WHERE WE MEET A VERY CAPABLE YOUNG WOMAN

"To Jean Baptiste Le Moyne
Sieur de Bienville
Native of Montreal, Canada,
Naval Officer
Of France
Governor of Louisiana
And Founder of the First Capital
Mobile,
1711
Born 1680—Died 1768
With the Genius to Create an Empire
And the Courage to Maintain It
Patient Amid Faction and Successful Even
In Defeat
He Brought His Settlement
The Prosperity of True Civilization
And the Happiness of Real Christianity.
He Who Founds a City Builds Himself
A Life-Long Monument."

In this fashion Mobile expresses her gratitude to the Canadian who immortalised himself in

the founding of both New Orleans and Mobile, and in putting the Latin imprint upon the two cities guaranteed their charm for all time. You may see the generous inscription in Bienville Square, where the citizens of Mobile have raised a granite cross to the great Frenchman, proving themselves more appreciative than New Orleans, who has so far neglected to honour Bienville's memory that only one small street has been named after him in the Creole City. Mobile dedicated its most beautiful square, a magnificent grove of live oaks in the centre of the city, to the man who followed in the footsteps of La Salle and Iberville and not only carried the French flag to the very mouth of the Mississippi, but planted it as far east as Florida.

Mobile was the capital of French Louisiana until 1723, and thereafter the city changed hands with the dizzy speed of a juggler's ball, sharing the fate of Pensacola and New Orleans, and passing from the French to the English, from the English to the Spanish, and finally casting in its lot with the new and untried United States. The colonists had very little to say as to what their allegiance should be, for the political intriguers of Europe pulled the wires that made Louisiana a French, English or Spanish province. Boundaries were elastic, flags were hoisted

only to be hauled down again, and the stamp of three nationalities was put upon the people who had ventured into the uncharted wilderness in search of religious freedom, riches or the maddest, boldest adventure. Mobile profited by her cosmopolitan experience, and like a woman who has lived in many countries and who speaks many languages, the city has emerged from her varied past socially expert.

The softness of the name, Mobile, Maubila of the Spaniards, is both gracious and distinguished. Such a combination of phonetics as "Mobile, Alabama" could not belong to a loutish city. And indeed one must dust off one's modern carelessness before one enters the fashionable Mobile's drawing room. She is an old woman now but she is a great personality, a creature of distinction, still intolerant of the leisurely and careless society of to-day. In the brilliant ante-bellum days she filled her salons with governors and generals, European nobles, rich planters, statesmen and merchants from Charleston and Boston, Liverpool, London, Glasgow and New York. And because she was witty, beautiful and aristocratic, she attracted men and women like herself and created around herself a sort of social glamour, a charm that was both rare and distinguished, and won her a

place with Charleston and Richmond in the social sun. She became so finished a product that one of her daughters, Madame Octavis Walton Levert, was presented to Queen Victoria at a "special drawing room" at a time when Americans were still popularly supposed to be savages and to live in wigwams. So it is not altogether improbable that Madame Levert placed the first bomb under the exalted edifice of British antagonism and helped to open the way to a mutual Anglo-American social understanding.

We came to Mobile from Pensacola across a lovely slice of Alabama that has been rudely devastated by the 1916 storms. Trees were snapped off two or three feet from the ground and thrown forward on their faces in an attitude of Moslem prayer. The hurricanes left a wide trail of these prostrated pines and oaks, and no one seems to have taken the trouble to haul away the dead wood or to prop up the over-zealous but still living worshippers. But the country is rich in timber, and where there is a surplus of anything there is always small regard for the source of supply. If the Italians of Tuscany could only see that wasted firewood! Where kindling wood is worth its weight in gold, a whole forest of decaying trees would

cause the mouth to water — Like Millet's canvas, "The Reapers," which always makes my back ache if I look at it too long, the snapped-off pines along the way to Mobile are so eternally bent over in an awkward attitude of prayer that I groaned out of sympathy.

And again the character of the country had mysteriously changed as if man-made boundary lines could transform the colour of the earth, the smell of the air and the very characteristics of the people. Alabama was not Alabama until after the Louisiana Purchase, but it is as different from Florida on the one hand and Louisiana on the other as black is from white. I have never understood why the crossing of a surveyed line should take one from the racial and geographical characteristics of one State into those of another, why Connecticut is so unlike Rhode Island, why Vermont is so entirely different from New Hampshire and so on, ad infinitum. Florida is still Spanish and Louisiana is French, while Alabama, set exactly between the two and only separated from them by an imaginary line and a different colour on the map, is wholly American. Alabama still belongs to a social past that was characteristically American in spite of, or perhaps because of its cosmopolitanism. It seemed to us that even

the soil changed as soon as we crossed the border, for the foothills of the Appalachians pour down to the Gulf, lifting the coast line of Alabama out of the water and mercifully ridding it of salt marshes and swampy bayous.

In Florida we had touched upon the tropics, passing through an endless waste of oak and cypress forest sunk to its knees in water and clogged with vine and moss. A Martian must see Florida as a beautiful green land pitted with lakes and laced with rivers, encroached upon by the waters of both the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. Wherever Florida rears herself out of the swamps there is a wealth of bloom and the moist, damp air is filled with the spicy sweetness of green bay and orange, live oak, holly, oleanders and magnolia, high reeds and bull-briers, sedge and palmetto, Spanish dagger and cypress. The country is grey and dusty in the early winter, and for that reason perhaps a disappointment to those travellers who leave the North too soon and cannot wait in Florida for the miraculous flowering of bushes and trees that makes the semi-tropical spring an ecstatic symphony of sweet odours and blazing colours. All the way down the Atlantic coast the winter landscape is a dusty, cinder-grey procession of moss-choked swamps and brittle palmetto scrub,

and there is no variation in the deadly monotony except where the hills of Tallahassee rise mysteriously out of the water-soaked plain

We did not see the azaleas in Mobile, for they bloom towards the end of February and, with our usual poor luck, we had come too soon for their blooming. The azaleas of Mobile do not grow in pots to live and die during Easter week, like our Northern azaleas. They are not decked out with blue bows and crinkly tissue paper for exhibition on the family piano. In Mobile, an azalea is a tree, often growing as high as the Italian camellia and just as richly starred with blossoms. I am repeating, dear Reader, what I heard in Mobile, and you need not put your finger on the side of your nose and accuse me of having a microscopic eye, like a horse's, which enlarges everything it sees.

The only flowers I saw in Mobile were in the florist shop windows, for nothing but a Christmas tree could have survived the bitter cold. There were undoubtedly some bitter tragedies in the great orange groves and truck gardens of Mobile County. Even the hardy Satsuma trees must have shivered in the icy wind that tore across Alabama from the North.

Travelling is a vicarious enjoyment unless climate and scenery are both guaranteed in ad-

vance. Mobile advertises a medium temperature and states positively that muslin in winter and furs in summer are the usual thing on Mobile Bay. And it must have been that we are hoodoos, for Mobile is strictly truthful about everything else, even stretching a point to assure the fisherman who goes to Coden or to Dauphine Island for "big game" fish that if tarpon and crevallier aren't biting well, John Rolston of Rolston's Hotel will tell him the strict truth. This, from a man who rents launches, bait and tackle, is the sort of integrity that touches the heart.

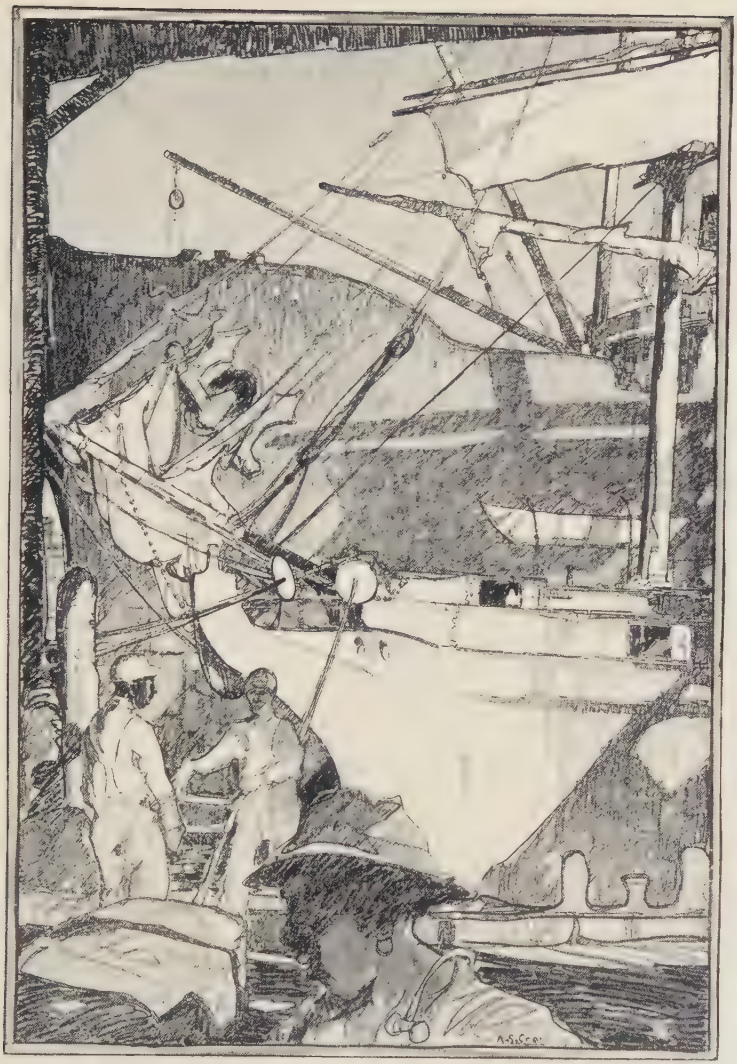
But the inhabitants of Mobile apparently live under a popular misapprehension as to the weather, for they were not prepared for the antics of the thermometer and went chattering about the city wrapped to the tips of their blue noses in woollen mufflers. Our blood had adjusted itself to tropical heat in Pensacola and, taken by surprise, refused to meet the situation. There is nothing on earth more depressing than being too cold unless it is being too hot! And in Mobile I was decidedly too cold. Time and time again we tucked ourselves into the revolving front doors of the Battle House and tried to brave the frosty wind, each time making the complete revolution and spinning back into the

warm lobby again, baffled and beaten. I had come to Mobile with romantic intentions, but they were nipped in the bud; I had wanted to make a sentimental pilgrimage to Augusta Jane Evan's home, because I had read "St. Elmo" and "Tales of the Alamo" when I should have been reading Hans Christian Andersen, and I owed Augusta Jane Evans a debt of gratitude for stolen sweets. I had wanted to pay humble tribute to Joseph Jefferson's rare and gentle art and in looking at his Mobile home to utter a little prayer of thankfulness for the legend of Rip Van Winkle and for Jefferson's interpretation of it. Jefferson opened the magic door of the theatre to me. "Rip Van Winkle" was my first play, and I can remember to this day how I wept for Rip's lost youth and the tragedy of his return from sleep. In those days I could weep at the spectacle of age because I was so immune from it myself. But now I am twenty-seven and the gibbering monster is at hand already, strangely transformed and glorified, as welcome as Rip himself would be.

Jefferson appeared in amateur theatricals at the Old Mobile Theater when he was a little boy, and the city has been grateful enough to the lovable stroller to place a tablet on his home, paying tribute to a "legal vagabond" as if he

were a general, an admiral or a millionaire philanthropist. It is not often that cities honour their players, preferring to raise monuments to more concrete benefactors and forgetting the inestimable debt humanity owes to those gracious men and women who have the gift of tears and laughter.

We finally did leave our hotel and ran briskly around the corner to Bienville Square and up and down Government Street once or twice, battling our way against the tempestuous wind with our heads down and our eyes shut. We fought valiantly to do our duty by Mobile, for it is in the spirit of the place to ward off defeat with one's dying breath. De Soto set the fashion by battling furiously with Tuscaloosa's warriors in the old Maubila; Andrew Jackson fanned the flame by defeating the British and their Indian allies under Colonel Nichols in 1814, and during the Civil War Admiral Farragut, sailing up Mobile Bay lashed to the mast of his ship like a modern Ulysses, cried, "Damn the mines!" and landed at South End, safe and sound. But it was hard to subdue the fighting spirit of aristocratic Mobile. After Farragut had captured Fort Morgan, the city boiled and bubbled with rebellion for a year. The last battle of the Civil War took place just outside



SHIPS FROM THE MEXICAN GULF AND THE CARIBBEAN

Mobile at Blakely on Sunday afternoon, April 9, 1865, several hours after Lee had surrendered. So that Lee's army really struck the penultimate blow for the flag of the Confederacy. And when the last futile hope had died, the poet-priest of the South, Father Ryan, voiced the tragic despair of the conquered people:

"Furl that banner, softly, slowly,
Treat it gently—it is holy—
For it droops above the dead.
Touch it not—unfold it never,
Let it droop there, furled forever,
For its people's hopes are dead."

Father Ryan was wrong, for hope is imperishable. The Confederate flag was indeed furled forever, but another flag floats bravely above the Confederate dead and Mobile has just honoured one of her sons who died for it at Vera Cruz in 1914. Esau Frohlichstein was the name of the Mobile boy who followed the Stars and Stripes into the Mexican town, and you may see the tablet to his memory in Fearn Way.

As we approached Mobile from Pensacola our train had skirted the river front, passing a beautiful procession of large schooners from the Mexican Gulf and the Caribbean Sea. They rode at anchor in the centre of the yellow stream,

their spars and masts rimmed magnificently with the crisp winter sunlight. It seemed to us that there were more sailing vessels than there were steamers in the port, and it cheered us enormously to think that the four-masted and five-masted merchantman has not vanished entirely from the high seas. The great ships carry lumber and coal to small ports in the far South. Long life to them and to their masters and to their crews! We saluted them once more as our train drew out of Mobile again, lifting our hats figuratively to their beauty and registering a vow to return to Mobile in the azalea season when the city will have taken off her woollen mufflers and put on muslin again.

We were not in New Orleans during the Carnival week, and I am not altogether sorry. When we were there, the Creole City had not put on her cap and bells to romp with Comus, Momus and Proteus. She had not hung incandescent bulbs about her beautiful neck or swathed herself in flags and bunting. Where most travellers see her rollicking behind a paper-cambric mask and a shapeless domino, we saw her in her least self-conscious and most gracious mood. She was indifferent to our tourist curiosity, but tender when she found that we had come to her as lovers.

We had the *vieux carré* pretty much to ourselves, and there, in the twisted, narrow old streets we encountered the real New Orleans. Modern New Orleans, who lives, officially, on the other side of Canal Street in the American quarter, insists that the real New Orleans is a business woman pure and simple, a creature of brains and ability, who wears starched shirtwaists and flat-heeled shoes, and who would rather pound a typewriter than play an old-fashioned love song on the family piano. But we knew better. We discovered, as all true lovers of New Orleans do sooner or later, that the delectable creature leads a double life.

The scandal troubles the dweller in New Orleans; he tries to hide it from you, Heaven knows why. Probably because he is convinced that such an irregularity in the city's life, if it were generally known, might injure her business standing, he keeps it dark. For the dweller in New Orleans is more interested in the city's present and future prosperity than in the most alluring and mendacious stories of her past. He wants you to think of her as a business woman, and he doesn't care a hang whether you are æsthetically upset by the ink-stains on her lovely fingertips, or the soot on the end of her delightful nose. He leads you at great length

and with some ostentation through Canal Street and points out the big department stores with their smart window displays and their revolving doors sucking in the tide of women shoppers as whirlpools gobble jetsam. He shows you the impressive Moving Picture theatres built to accommodate opera-size audiences and serving celluloid dramas to the accompaniment of churchly organ music.

He takes you into the Grunewald Hotel and, steering you with an expert and accustomed hand through the mobs in the gilt and marble lobby, dives with you into the Cave, an artificial Paradise for those modern spirits who prefer to eat in the dark, who really like the ukelele and the big bass drum, and who enjoy that sort of vaudeville which encroaches upon the dining-room table.

To further impress you, if you are inclined to doubt Miss New Orleans' up-to-dateness, he dines with you in the scented magnificence of the St. Charles or at Kolb's, a German restaurant in St. Charles Street where *Alt Heidelberg* is reconstructed to suit American taste and where nickel-topped steins, china pipes, oak furniture, beamed ceilings and Swiss waiters are calculated to throw you into a German state of mind. If this is a subtle propaganda, there was something

wrong with the artificial atmosphere when we were there, for the big, smoke-clouded dining-room was full of Americans reading the latest War Extras and taking the *Times-Picayune's* incendiary editorials and fiery anti-Teutonism together with their *sauerkraut und bier.*

And as for us, we ordered Frau Kolb's own particular "fried chicken Southern style" and ate it with relish while we discussed what America would do to the Horrible Hun when she finally woke from her lethargy and gathered herself together.

Inside, an atmosphere redolent of the new Germany, an American interpretation, by Germans, of the *Hofbrauhaus;* outside, war extras still limp and wet from the press, selling like hot cakes! The indescribably hoarse shouts of the newsboys drifted in to us and made strange discords with the steady flow of German that poured out of the swinging, eternally banging kitchen doors!

When I had finished the delectable fried chicken, a fried chicken worthy of the best Southern culinary traditions, a fried chicken worthy of a Creole mammy, I asked the Swiss waiter whether Frau Kolb had prepared the dish herself. I was told that her recipe had passed from chef to chef of the establishment,

but that Frau Kolb had retired from the activities of the restaurant kitchens.

The dweller in New Orleans, still fearful that you may have discovered the scandal in New Orleans' life and feeling that he must entertain you before he can satisfy the desire of his heart and tell you of his sweetheart's business ability, proceeds to entertain you, as he does everything, lavishly. For the dweller in New Orleans, more than any man in the world except perhaps the New Yorker, opens his pocket-book as well as his heart to the stranger. In him the traditional hospitality of the South is exaggerated tenfold; he comes of a long ancestry of reckless, spendthrift, thoroughly generous and high-spirited men who drank, loved, fought, prayed and died with open-handed generosity. It is in his blood to share his pleasures and to send the traveller away with his pockets, his handbag, his trunk, his hands and even the crown of his hat crammed with gifts.

For what other purpose was the delectable praline, that sugar-cane and pecan concoction of surpassing delicacy and diabolical temptation, invented save to ravish the soul of the visitor? I was never able to pass a praline shop without stopping to buy one of the big candies that look so much like Spanish doubloons and taste like

something one might buy in a candy store in Paradise. They were packed for shipment in ornamental boxes; by simply writing the address of the "loved one up North" on the cover and paying a dollar and a few odd cents, you can start another advertisement of New Orleans on its way. There is a flavour about the praline amazingly suggestive of New Orleans itself; it is a romantic taste, and I would be willing to wager that thousands of tourists have been drawn across the continent in pursuit of it, just as in ante-bellum days one turned toward Vienna for coffee 'n' rolls. I ate pralines in the street; I nibbled them in the grateful shadows of the Movie theatres; I tried to satiate myself with the elusive deliciousness, but I could not have succeeded, for the very memory of the adorable confection brings tears to my eyes.

Nothing that the dweller in New Orleans had to offer could match the peculiar charm of the praline. And I think he resented our affection for the frivolous candy as if it reflected in some mysterious way upon the integrity, the ability, the astounding business talent of his mistress.

"She is modern," he assured us, time and time again, "absolutely modern. The old New Orleans is dead. Of course," shrugging his shoulders and spreading out his hands, "we re-

gret the passing of so delightful a creature. But you know, my dear friends, she was perverse; she was dreadfully dangerous. She was untidy, too, and never swept in the corners or washed down the steps or polished the windows. When the modern New Orleans came along, she had to drive out the mosquitoes that infested the gardens, carrying the yellow fever on their poisoned wings; she had to rat-proof the houses for fear of the bubonic plague. The old New Orleans was a careless wench and altogether too many people fell in love with her. She was frivolous, she danced too much; she slept all day and feasted all night. She died, and the modern New Orleans—a splendid woman, a capable woman!—set about recovering the improvident creature's fortune."

"But," we wanted to know, "does any one ever fall in love with this modern New Orleans? Do people lose their heads, as they used to, at the very sight of her?"

"Why, yes," answered the dweller in New Orleans, looking slightly confused and dropping his eyes, "business men, go-ahead young men adore her. She is so supremely capable. I will show you how she amuses herself. There are no more tawdry gowns and seductive smiles, sly flirtations and serenades, perfumed notes and

stolen kisses. Modern New Orleans patterns herself after New York and Chicago. She is *chic*. You will see. . . ."

You go to the opera; it is not the traditional audience you have dreamed of finding, nor is the performance given in the old French Opera House, Gallier's famous theatre "across Canal Street" in the *vieux carré,* where Patti sang and where the glorious traditions of French opera were upheld for fifty years. It is, instead, Boston grand opera, an unworthy performance of Mascagni's "Iris," which the dweller in New Orleans offers you as a sop for those fascinating days of French opera, when New Orleans wore all of her jewels, bared her beautiful neck, stuck a flower in her hair and dazzled the ardent Creole beaux through the interminable operas of another day. Meyerbeer, Auber, Rossini, Donizetti, Ponchielli—can you hear the lilting arias, the trills and cadenzas and tripping melodies? Can you see the *ballerine* floating, like powder puffs, across the stage? In those days the music lovers packed the galleries as they do in all Latin countries, and New Orleans got the name of being music-mad and therefore musically intelligent, for one grows out of the other. Strakosch and Canonge and Beauplan directed in those golden days of New Orleans' musical

past, and who knows now, since great voices are as evanescent as dandelion puffs, how many famous tenors and sopranos reached the climax of their fame on the stage of the French Opera House?

Modern New Orleans seems strangely content to listen to music in a theatre unhallowed and unseasoned by such precious memories, for the old opera house in the *vieux carré* is deserted, a ghost-ridden place peeling and faded like an ancient *ballerina,* where the "glorious traditions" are shut away with those embarrassing memories of old New Orleans.

But you are not given time to drop a tear on the grave of French opera. The dweller in New Orleans hustles you into his motor and you rush smoothly through the city along broad avenues bordered with palms and oaks, crêpe myrtle and ligustrum, feathery bamboo and giant Louisiana cane, past splendid modern homes set deeply in gardens and girdled with wide lawns, past green parks and monuments and impressive public buildings, out of the city altogether to the white shell road which borders the New Basin Canal. Then the dweller in New Orleans tries to break all speed records, for he loves speed as well as ability, in getting you to West End. You shut your eyes, pray hard for your guardian angel

to clear the road and count a hundred. When you get to ninety-nine you are in West End, a brand-new resort which has been built over the ruins of an older and possibly more likable resort destroyed several years ago during one of the violent Gulf storms.

West End is in a painful state of newness; where there should be trees, a forest of ornamental street lamps springs from the neat patches of clipped green sward. The dweller in New Orleans tells you that the place is crowded in summer and that the automobiles of breeze-seeking New Orleans stand wheel to wheel along the driveway; with eloquent gestures he describes the Prismatic Fountain, a sort of Wagnerian nightmare of coloured lights and thin, high-tossed water jets and drifting clouds of spray. But even such cheap attractions as this cannot spoil the beauty of Pontchartrain, a beautiful lake full of caprices and subject to fits of anger, but ideal, in its calmer moods, for the small sailing boat, the flower-laden and lumbersome house-boat and the jaunty pleasure launch. It perhaps feels a sense of its commercial importance, for a canal is being cut which will join Pontchartrain to the Mississippi and make a great industrial artery of the lake. Modern New Orleans never overlooks an opportunity

for trade expansion. For a long time she has had her eye on a certain canal in Panama—

The dweller in New Orleans pulled himself up short, for it is not his custom to mention business when there are pleasures on hand; he never wears a preoccupied frown when he is playing host. He said nothing more of Panama but turned his car out of West End and took us to the Bungalow, a roadhouse on the way back to New Orleans famous for the lyric talents of its *chef d'orchestre*. The genial black can improvise, to an indescribable tune of his own, couplets without end. He rhymes as easily as you and I breathe. He grins, rocks, shows his capacious gums and spins verses as a spider spins a thread. He will take any theme you offer him—war, politics or personalities—put it into his extraordinary black brain and draw it out again as poetry.

The dweller in New Orleans scribbled our names and something about us on the back of the menu card and smuggled the information through several black palms crossed with silver to the *improvisateur* so that we were astounded to hear ourselves immortalised in verse. It was all perfectly good-natured and in good taste, although I can see how one might precipitate some

pretty scandals by giving the poet embarrassing personalities for elaboration.

This sort of thing could not have gone on in the New Orleans of the past, where any familiarity set the young bloods off like firecrackers. It used to be a ticklish business to jest with a Creole about the cut of his nose or the colour of his vest or the state of his heart. The practical joker or the genial drunk usually found himself paying for the follies of his wagging tongue under the duelling oaks. Many young men settled these little matters of honour with their lives. One fire-eating member of Congress fought eighteen duels in defence of his opinions, and we wonder, in retrospect, whether they could have been worth defending! They fought for excitement, for sport, and for exercise, apparently, for scarcely a morning passed that there were not one or two meetings under the duelling oaks, and it is an historical fact that ten duels were fought there one Sunday morning between dawn and the breakfast hour! They quarrelled over nothing at all and battled like demons with sword and pistol in defence of what seems to us a supersensitive honour. And sometimes the result was tragic and ended in a young life snuffed out and another young life embittered, and sometimes it was ludicrous.

Bernard Marigny, who was a famous wit, wagged his barbed tongue once too often in the presence of the exquisite Monsieur Tissier, the Beau Brummel of New Orleans. For a long time, the story goes, Monsieur Tissier had endured Marigny's exaggerated and probably offensive greetings. "Ah, Monsieur Tissier," Marigny would exclaim whenever he encountered the fashionable young man, "what a beau you are! How I admire you! How deeply, how profoundly, how utterly I admire you!" This sort of thing is hard to bear. Tissier lost his temper finally and challenged the wit to a duel. They met (probably at dawn when the beau was not looking his best) under the famous oaks in the City Park. Marigny faced his furious opponent seriously and said, in a tragic voice, "What a *delightful* fellow you are! Must I really deprive the world of the incomparable Beau Tissier?" Tissier, to his everlasting credit, burst into laughter and the duel was called off.

To-day the old duelling oaks afford a pleasant circle of shade in the wide-spreading fields and clipped lawns of a public park. What used to be Louis Allard's plantation has become a masterpiece of landscape gardening, an exquisite realisation of a Watteau background. If Louis Allard could leave his grave under the oaks and

see the classic peristyle where his sugar cane used to grow, he would not believe his eyes. Poor Allard wrote verses and had so little business sense in his poetic head that when he died nothing belonged to him of his plantation save the scant six feet of his grave. But that was dearly beloved earth, and Louis Allard probably lay down in it contentedly. His oaks are still alive, inconceivably gnarled and wrapped in moss. But where his neglected cotton and indigo grew there are velvety golf links and smooth polo fields; and where the sandy, deeply rutted, ambling roads used to be, there are boulevards bordered with palms and purring motors pursuing each other in an endless game of tag. No, Louis Allard, you had best not leave your little grave under the oaks! It is your own, and there is poetry in the dense branches overhead, a faint fragrance of the old New Orleans, dreams of a romantic and vanished past. . . .

There were pleasures I could not share. The dweller in New Orleans introduced Allan to gin fizzes as they are concocted at Ramos's and to a certain cocktail at Sazerac's which almost persuaded Allan to settle down in the Creole City for life.

But all the while we were not permitted to cross Canal Street; the dweller in New Orleans

kept us away from the *vieux carré,* and we dined at the St. Charles or in the Forest Grill at the Grunewald in an atmosphere which might have been bottled in New York or Chicago, labelled Broadway or Michigan Avenue and shipped to New Orleans for tourist consumption. It was the height of the racing season and the big Grunewald was crowded. All day long, and apparently most of the night, the track habitués filled the lobby. Getting from the front door to the elevators was a blighting business. The close-packed mob of men, most of them having that acute forward curve of the eye which George Randolph Chester attributes to a life-long study of the "shell and bean trick," had to be charged head down. The Grunewald was already "booked up" for the Carnival season, and prices had begun to soar in anticipation of the week of gaiety which began, in 1917, on the twentieth of February and continued in a mad *crescendo* of pleasure until Fat Tuesday, Mardi Gras of the Latins.

Carnival, or *carne vale,* has lost its meaning as an English word, for carnival is literally the "farewell to flesh" before the sober denials of Lent. The good-bye is a long one in New Orleans, the gay city putting off the inevitable discipline with six days of mad excitement—street

parades, balls, masked frolics and public and private entertainments of all sorts. And since New Orleans has to care for as many as fifty thousand visitors, it requires an ambassador's diplomacy or an inflated pocket-book or both to engage rooms at any of the hotels during Carnival. You are a lucky tourist indeed if at the eleventh hour you are given a square inch and a pillow—not that you will need the pillow at all during Carnival week except for an early morning recuperation! They tell the story in New Orleans of the hotel guest who sauntered up to the desk at noon and, stifling a yawn, asked for his mail.

"D. Jones," said he.

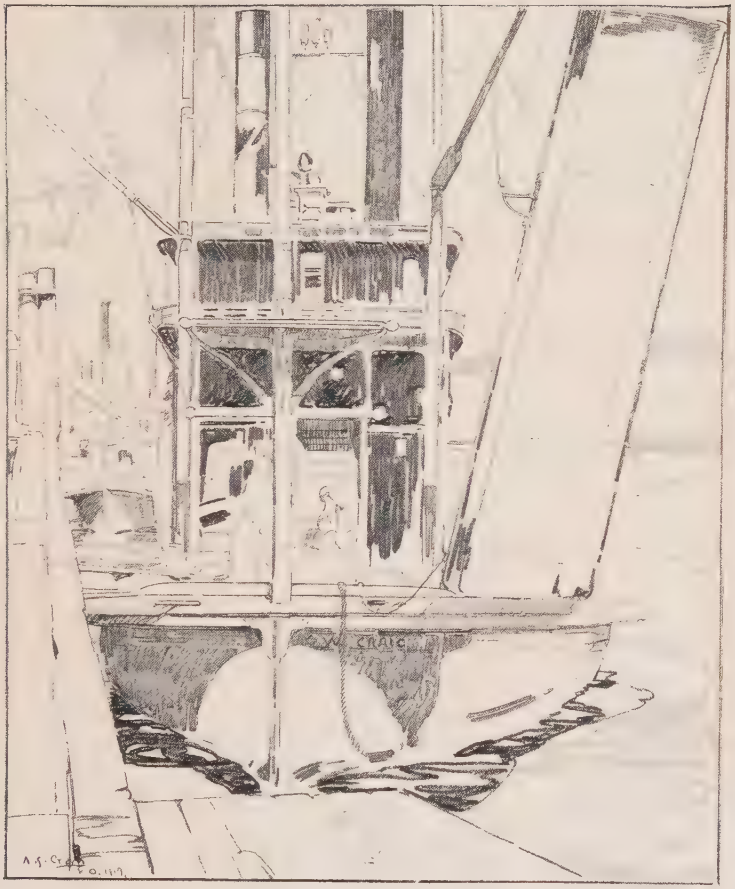
"Room number, please?" the harassed clerk enquired.

"Bathroom Z," replied the cheerful reveller, surrendering his key.

It takes more than a bed in a bathtub to depress the Carnival tourist. He enjoys himself. And because New Orleans is first and last a Latin city, she sees to it that he enjoys himself in the New Orleans way. For Carnival in New Orleans is the very spirit of gaiety, a grotesque madness, a delightful joke—it is never, never an affair of confetti and vulgarity. It takes the true soul of fun to put on a mask and romp in

public, and in New Orleans one sees that rare social talent *en masse,* a whole population bent on fun and getting it without once offending good taste or self-control. There are not many cities in the world where such a thing would be possible. It would not be possible in New York —if you have ever scratched, clawed and battled your way through a New Year's Eve crowd on Broadway you will know why. It was not possible in Munich even in those ante-strafing days of Bavarian revelry. It would not be possible in London. But in Vienna—Wien, the rogue!—it always has been possible for there you find the light touch, the inestimable gift of gaiety. In Florence, in Rome, in all the hill towns of Italy you may romp streetwards, if you choose, in a domino, an incandescent nose and a musical shirt-bosom, and meet nothing more offensive than a tickling feather and a compliment. So it is in New Orleans.

The fun begins with the parade of the knights of Momus, one of the four leading Carnival societies responsible for the decorated floats and the elaborate street pageants that have meant so much in the life of the city since 1827. Rex, Comus and Proteus follow in lively procession. Canal Street is a seething river of people. The huge floats, like gilded and frosted sugar-cake



YOU REMEMBER JIM BLUDSO, DON'T YOU? I'LL SHOW YOU HIS WORLD

nightmares, trundle in comic magnificence through the crowds. There are monstrous swans, bloated dragons, castles, suns, caverns, giants. Angels with crêpey hair balance on swollen clouds blowing gilded trumpets; bearded Neptunes brandish tridents, clowns gambol and grin. There are toad-faced men and dwarfs, gnomes, kings and queens in ermine and rhinestones. It is amazingly gay and grotesque; the people pack the streets all day; crowds pour in from the neighbouring cities and towns, the restaurants are busier than ever, and there are Carnival balls every night where you may dance until dawn and start another day without having gone to your fabulously expensive hall bedroom at all!

The dweller in New Orleans seemed to fear that we would take the Carnival too seriously. He deprecated the week's frivolity as if he were apologising for some hereditary weakness. And before we could discover why a serious business woman should spend a fortune on tinsel trappings once a year, the dweller in New Orleans changed the subject. He uttered the magic word "Panama," which is a sort of industrial kismet in the Crescent City, an Open Sesame to the inmost heart of American New Orleans.

"I will show you," he said, "what we are do-

ing to prepare ourselves for the trade that is bound to come through the Panama Canal after the war. Commerce must some day return to its normal activity. When it does, New Orleans will be ready for it. She owns most of her water-front property; she is improving her railway facilities; she is putting a short-cut through to Lake Pontchartrain from the Mississippi; she is going to be exceptionally nice to large steamers from all over the world, so that if they come once they will come again! What are you going to do about it, you New Yorkers? Presently New Orleans will be written large on the industrial map of the world; she will stand shoulder to shoulder with Liverpool, Hamburg, Rotterdam and London!"

The dweller in New Orleans, with a fanatic gleam in his eyes, seized his hat and beckoned to us.

"Come! I'll show you some wonderful things. I'll show you the great Mississippi rolling down to the Gulf between the high levees, bringing grain from the Middle West and cotton from the whole Mississippi Valley. I'll show you where the famous river steamers, loaded to their hurricane decks with bales of cotton, used to wait six or eight deep at the wharves. Fifty years ago they came into New Orleans one

after the other, bursting their steam lungs to make and to break speed records. They brought rich planters from up the river, gamblers, slaves, immigrants, riff-raff and rich gentry coming down to New Orleans for a holiday. You remember Jim Bludso, don't you? I'll show you his world—a vastly changed world since Jim Bludso's day, for there aren't any tumble-down wharves and jetties left, and the river steamers, like old Jim himself, have disappeared—gone, we hope, to some river Paradise of their own. I'll show you miles of city-owned docks and a cotton warehouse that covers a hundred acres, where machinery does the work of slaves and lifts, sorts, loads and unloads two million bales of cotton a year. What would Bludso say to that, eh? I'll show you grain elevators, banana wharves and coffee wharves, ships loading and ships unloading—you'll hear every language under the sun—even German if you venture near the interned ships. And if you don't say that New Orleans is New York's most dangerous rival," he said, wagging his finger under our astonished noses, "I'll eat my hat!"

We didn't want him to eat his hat, and we knew his spirit well enough to be certain that if we didn't indulge in superlatives he *would* eat it. crown. brim and all. So we followed him

to the water-front and saw the resistless Mississippi—(what a happy name it is! It rolls and hisses like the yellow stream itself!)—caged between the levees and snarling at the city it has inundated so many times. We spent hours in the steel and concrete warehouses and gazed lovingly at big ships lying like passive Prometheuses while the giant claws of snorting derricks dived into their vitals. We were deafened by the rattle and clamour of commerce. We saw New Orleans, capable, canny New Orleans, sitting in her comfortable front parlour waiting for the ships that are bound to come up from Panama after the war. Watch out, New York, for your Creole rival! She may have ink-stained fingers and soot-grimed cheeks, but she is clever, she is capable, she is far-sighted and—

"I know she leads a double life," I whispered to Allan, as we came out into Canal Street again.

"Who, for goodness' sake?" Allan demanded, looking startled.

"New Orleans. I have heard that she is French and dangerous and alluring. Let's run away from the dweller in New Orleans and find out for ourselves."

CHAPTER XI

CREOLES, PRALINES AND A LITTLE HISTORY

SO at Royal Street we excused ourselves and ran like two children into the *vieux carré*. For you know that Canal Street divides New Orleans in two, just as the Danube divides Buda from Pesth, just as the Seine divides the Paris of to-day from the Paris of Montmartre and yesterday, just as the Thames divides London, and the Arno Florence and the Tiber Rome. On the right side of Canal Street as you face the river lies the American city, bristling with energy and ambition, noise and electric lights, shops, Movie theatres, banks, tourist offices, sky-scrapers and street cars; on the left is the old city, the most completely foreign place in the United States, where the width of the streets, the paving stones, the architecture, the people, and even human voices are utterly different and alien and arresting and unforgettable. You leave the tawdry crowd in Canal Street and

plunge into a world of soft-spoken people; you leave modern department stores and come upon curiosity shops that would have delighted Anatole France, dim and musty places filled with the spoils of all that magnificence which centred about the Place d'Armes. The windows are full of odds and ends of bronze and china, crystal and tarnished silver, and little trays, full of old-fashioned jewelry—hoop earrings, monstrous bracelets set with cameos, necklaces of Etruscan gold, fat watches that must have ticked in the pockets of embroidered waistcoats, signet rings and seals. We stopped every now and then to wander into the dim and dusty places, making believe that we could afford to buy some rare bit of Sèvres "only slightly cracked, as you see, Madame," just for the pleasure of watching the antiquarian take the piece in his hands, blow off the accumulation of dust and whisper, in an ingratiating voice, a price that would have staggered a Morgan. I have a passion for long earrings which Allan says is due to my ungratified longing to be a movie-vampire. I don't look at all like a vampire—to tell the truth, after making a hurried trip to the looking-glass, I don't believe I can describe myself at all. And, as far as I can remember, my friends have only made two attempts to do it for me. Usually

people approach me with a Samaritan gleam in their eyes and prepare me for the worst by saying in a soothing voice, "I am going to tell you something for your own good, my dear," which always prefaces something utterly nasty and hard to bear. I brace myself and hear the truth. But on two memorable occasions the formula was varied. "I am going to tell you something nice, my dear," was followed by the announcement that Percy B. Shelley and I looked enough alike to be twins, and that I was the dead, breathing image, whatever that means, of George Eliot! I struggled under the shame of it for years, and might never have recovered my self-respect at all if it had not been restored to me by a shop-girl. This is how it happened. She had been staring at me with such fixed attention that she had stopped chewing gum.

"Good Lord," I thought, "does she think I am Mark Twain?"

Apparently not. She nudged her neighbour shop-girl and I heard her hoarse whisper, "Seen her in the movies?"

"Naw," said the other, staring, too. "The one with the earrings?"

"Yeh. Ain't you seen her in the movies?"

"Naw. Whatcher call her?"

"Edith Storey," declared the blessed restorer of my self-respect. "She's some swell little emoter."

Edith Storey! I rose in my own esteem. I hugged myself. I was born again.

But where were we? Trying on earrings in a New Orleans curiosity shop in Royal Street—the Rue Royal which can't be pronounced save by a true Parisian, a cockney of the boulevards. Try it and see!

I dangled a large cluster of golden and amethyst grapes against my cheeks and peered into a cracked mirror while Allan, with his chin tucked into his collar and a capitalist's manner, priced Napoleonic escritoires and Wedgewood plates. I tried another pair made of coral, fringed with Etruscan gold, and asked Allan, as I turned my head this way and that, "D' you like them at all?"

Allan tore himself away from the impassioned salesman and examined me critically. "You would need a Madame Bovary velvet gown with a square train to wear earrings like that," he decided. "And you are too young to wear velvet."

It was a triumph of diplomacy. I bought a pair of light hoops very delicately made and altogether sub-deb and frivolous. It saved us

THIS IS THE REAL NEW ORLEANS!

from an ignominous retreat at least, but I put the Madame Bovary corals back in their tray reluctantly with a sigh for the vanished picture of myself in a velvet gown with a square train. . . .

Out in Royal Street again we shouted aloud.

"This is the real New Orleans! We are finding her out. She has put aside her sailor hat and her tailored suit and has slipped into a ruffled dressing gown, an untidy dressing gown a little too long in the back. She has put her pretty bare feet into slippers and has clasped a string of pearls around her neck. She is at home again, in her shabby, dusty old house full of beautiful things. She is lazy and sensuous and mysterious and provoking. She hums little Creole songs: *Il va partir et n'a pas vue mes larmes* or *Pauvre piti' Mamsel Zizi.* She may, oh, she *may* ask us to supper. . . ."

And of course she did. She explained, not apologetically, but sadly, that her most famous chefs were dead. Boudro, Moreau, Antoine Alciatore *père,* the elder Madame Begue, famous cooks of another generation, could not be there to serve us. But we could still have an amazing breakfast at Begue's if we should stop there any morning at eleven o'clock. Galatoire's was excellent. Or we could go to Antoine's in

St. Louis Street or to the Louisiane in Iberville Street. Alciatore *père* bequeathed his secrets to his two sons, Jules and Fernand; one is in charge of Antoine's, the other of the Louisiane, and it is a toss-up which of the two is the best restaurant. The Louisiane has been garnished and brightened recently, and both of the old cafés have done away with the characteristic sanded floors of the past. Of the two places, Antoine's is the simpler and Jules presides in the kitchen. The Louisiane has surrendered to the dancing onslaught, and an excited little waiter proudly showed us a large room with a polished floor which has been set aside for those fox-trotters and one-steppers who have so little reverence of the masterpieces of Alciatore *fils* that they will dance between mouthfuls.

It was at the Louisiane that we met the lover of New Orleans. He was sitting at a table not far from us, hidden behind a copy of *Le Rire* three months old, just as we had left him five years before in Paris. We had parted from him then, after a month spent pleasantly together in exploring the "other bank of the Seine," at a little restaurant in the Rue des Saints Pères where we had stopped to drink to our next meeting.

"You must come to New Orleans some day,"

he had said. "I expect to go back there next year or the year after. You will like it."

We had promised and had left him, little thinking that the mysterious threads of our complex destinies were to draw us back to America and southward to New Orleans and into the Louisiane; little thinking that our friend's destiny would lie towards the Marne and that it would lead him into battle for France and up to the gates of death and then mysteriously back again into delectable life. . . .

He heard our voices and lowered *Le Rire* to stare at us. And it was as if five years had evaporated into thin air with all their anxieties and anguish, pleasures and loves, and we were back at the start again—three young pairs of eyes looking at an untarnished and romantic world.

"So you have come to New Orleans after all," he said.

And then there was bedlam! The Louisiane, from Fernand to Fernand *fils,* from the cashier to the oldest waiter, joined in the reunion.

"I've come to sit at the knees of my first goddess," he told us. "I can't fight for her because there is a piece of German shrapnel waltzing around my anatomy and blighting my locomotive powers—but I can love her. Paris has my

soul, but New Orleans has my heart. I am a good Creole."

We toasted his sweetheart in absinthe, a little pale green drink flavoured delicately with paregoric, so insidious that where you should take one you take two—and so on. We went all the way to the old Absinthe House over on Bourbon Street, so that we might pledge on historic pledging ground. But when we knocked at the door a very polite and positive fellow in a tweed cap opened it an inch or two and whispered, "Very pleased to serve the two gentlemen. But I can't serve the lady. The lid is on." And then shut the door in our faces.

So we had to turn away from the famous old place, where at one time I could have toasted New Orleans in a true Parisian mixture of Melissa and Fennel, Anise and Hyssop, the absinthe frappée of delectable memory. We went back to the Louisiane and pledged our hostess in Spanish absinthe before the first course of our supper was served.

I don't know whether Allan and the lover of New Orleans noticed it, but absinthe is not my habitual beverage and I sank back almost at once into an abyss of strange mental mists where I was acutely conscious of the dining-room, the smiling and paternal waiter, the chattering din-

ers and, before me, a plate of baked oysters—acutely conscious and at the same time irreparably divided, set aside like a lost soul behind a transparent and imprisoning veil. It was an atrocious nightmare. But I must have acquitted myself well, for Allan asked me if I would like another absinthe. Another! I rose slowly out of the numbing languor to shake my head, and then sank again like a pebble falling to the bottom of a deep pool.

The appalling thing passed as quickly as it had come; the veil was whisked away and I heard the rattle of dishes and the clamour of voices distinctly again. I pushed the little glass of pale green froth across the table with a shudder and speared one of the divine oysters. Another? Rather not!

Day after day we dined at the Louisiane or at Antoine's, so that with our devotion we won smiles from the Alciatore family, from Jules and Fernand and his son and from old Madame Alciatore, who was the wife of Antoine *père* and who still sits enthroned behind the *caisse* and makes change nimbly and unceasingly. I should like to tell you of all the delicious things we had to eat, for the dishes of the two Alciatore brothers deserve the praise one would give a work of art. I remember the gumbo *à la Creole,*

of course, for that is first and last a New Orleans delicacy; I remember the *bouillabaisse,* the hot breads, the bisque of crayfish *à la Cardinal,* and pompano *en Papillote;* I remember oysters disguised and oysters glorified, and tomatoes *purée* that would have melted in the mouth of a snow man, and salads that might have been sent on a magic carpet from Paoli's in Florence, duck pressed *à la Tour d'Argent,* brûlot and adorable little pastries meant only for gods and goddesses, not for hungry mortals.

The secret of it all? Who knows! What is the secret behind a Tintoretto or a beautiful gown or a Strauss song? A little pepper, a little skill and much art. When the famous Café Brûlot *Diabolique* is served at Antoine's, the lights are lowered in the restaurant. The serving of such a coffee becomes, appropriately, a rite, and it is a solemn moment when the silver bowls, ablaze with burning cognac, make their appearance in the crowded café. Strangely, since we claim to love freedom, it is ceremony and not license which appeals most strongly to our heart of hearts!

From the moment of our first discovery, the *vieux carré* claimed us every day. The sixty squares of the original city still enclose all that is most appealing of romantic New Orleans.

Few changes have been made in it, and it speaks well for the taste and veneration of modern New Orleans that the characteristic balconied houses built of adobe and stuccoed brick have not been interfered with. The city which rose out of the destructive fire of 1794 looks very much as it did over a hundred years ago. The doors are flush with the street and the houses are built in the Spanish fashion to enclose an inner court. The tinted and peeling walls are so varied in surface and colour that one is led from corner to corner in pursuit of the picturesque, now attracted by the high-piled iron balconies or the dormer windows or the quaint chimney pots of some delightful old house, now lured by a glimpse of weed-grown gardens. It is quite true that the quarter has been given over in part to Italians from the *bassa Italia* and to negroes. But a few Creoles still cling to their city; I have heard their soft voices and ingratiating *patois* everywhere in the streets.

What the racial status of the Creole really is has been misunderstood, if not generally, at least by a great enough number of people to warrant an explanation of the matter here. A Creole is a person of mixed Spanish and French blood, a native of New Orleans, and not, as is occasionally supposed, a French or a Spanish mu-

latto. The octoroons and quadroons, who played such a sinister part in the story of the city, have been confused, perhaps not unnaturally, with the Creoles. The social distinction between the two was not only desirable but necessary. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, when New Orleans had begun to recover from the effects of an unstable and adventurous history, the idle, spendthrift, profligate young men of the town dangled at the heels of the pretty yellow women who came from Jamaica, Santa Domingo and the French West Indies. These women were often amazingly beautiful; there was just enough white blood in their veins to make them conspicuously unlike negresses, and they were a danger to the social life of New Orleans. They dressed in the height of fashion, established themselves luxuriously and flaunted their mulatto loveliness under the outraged noses of the Creole matrons.

There are terrible stories of the wild, utterly abandoned orgies that took place during the famous quadroon balls of the period. The ballroom was in a building in Orleans Street near the little gardens of St. Anthony's Close, and it is said that white men fought duels in the Close over the yellow sirens. An order of coloured nuns has turned the dance-hall into a convent,

STUCCOED BRICK WALLS, ARCADES AND COOL INNER COURTS

but no number of litanies and candles, tears and prayers can make the place anything but tragically suggestive of that unmoral and degenerate society. The alluring quadroons might have disrupted the social life of New Orleans if the law had not finally forced all women of negro blood to wear the *tignon,* the distinguishing bandana headdress which branded the wearer as conspicuously and perhaps as tragically as Hester Pryne's scarlet letter.

But if you would know more about the quadroons, read Cable's "Old Creole Days." Madame John's house is in Dumaine Street—a two-story house deeply balconied, as forlorn and dilapidated as a house can be; the shutters are closed, the pillars of the balcony lean drunkenly, the whole place totters as if a slight push would send it crashing down.

Cable is not the only "literary memory" of New Orleans. Alcée Fortier and Gayarré, in their histories of Louisiana, told the exciting story of the Crescent City as well as it could be told, although there is a more recent book by Miss Grace King, "New Orleans, the Place and the People," that reads like a novel and has the double advantage of being perfectly true. Lafcadio Hearn, the myopic Greek-Oriental-Irish-American, who saw life and people and things

dimly and vested them with his own amazing imagination, lived a part of his life in New Orleans. He knew every street and courtyard in the *vieux carré,* and he collected some of the most amusing of the Creole proverbs and called the little book "Gombo Zebes." His best story, "Chita," was written about the wild country at the mouth of the Mississippi and the hurricane that destroyed Last Island in 1856. "Chita," like Conrad's "Typhoon," is a hair-raising picture of nature on the rampage, nature let loose and furious, implacable, terrifying and unendurable. After reading it I had no desire to go to Grand Isle, the pirate La Fitte's stamping ground. Byron chose that adorable buccaneer for the hero of his "Corsair," and I ought to have been willing to pursue such literary treasure to the ends of the earth. But when we were in New Orleans the weather was erratic; it was alternately as cold as Burlington, Vermont, and as hot as Bay Head, New Jersey. And since Grand Isle is occasionally blown to ribbons in the teeth of the devouring hurricanes that sweep across the Gulf, I fought shy of going there.

La Fitte was a magnificent fellow, a pirate with the "grand manner" and surely no worse a villain than the submarine commanders of today. He called himself a privateer, and if he

attacked and robbed English merchantmen he explained that he was privileged, as a bearer of letters of marque from the Republic of Carthagena, to plunder enemy ships. This has a familiar sound to our modern ears, accustomed to the excuses and self-justifications of U-boat pirates!

The legend of La Fitte has taken on romance with time, and New Orleans is rather proud of him to-day. They show you the site of his little blacksmith shop at the corner of Chartres and St. Philip Streets, where he is supposed to have wrought a great many of the beautiful iron railings and balustrades in the old city before he "hit the trail" to piracy and fame. Like so many of those historical criminals whom we have learned to admire by simply sitting cosily in our library and shuddering at their fearlessness, La Fitte had his own sense of honour. The British had so great a respect for his ability that when they were getting ready to attack New Orleans in 1814, they tried to win La Fitte over to their side. Whereupon the bold freebooter rushed back to New Orleans and offered his sword to General Andrew Jackson in the campaign against the British! This act of patriotism greatly endeared the pirate to New Orleans, and if he had stayed in the city until death gave

him his reward, he would have had it without any doubt. But he sailed away to a mysterious fate, and the thwarted Creoles erected a monument in the St. Louis Cemetery to his lieutenant, Dominique You, calling him, of all things, the new Bayard—*sans peur et sans reproche!*

Eugene Field and Thomas Bailey Aldrich have given their genius to the celebration of the Creole charm, and France, too, contributed to the literature that has grown out of the settlement of Louisiana. The Abbé Prévost's "Manon Lescaut," the first French novel, is a story of the *filles à la cassette,* the "casket girls" who were sent over from France to those wifeless settlers who were "running in the woods after the Indian girls" and were in need of wives. Iberville had come from Canada, following in La Salle's footsteps in 1699, and had seen what any far-sighted man was bound to have seen, that a city at the mouth of the Mississippi would be also at the mouth of the whole continent. Iberville died ignominiously of a yellow fever and left the task of establishing New Orleans to his brother, Bienville. And Bienville, sending engineers and workmen to lay out the city, actually built the *vieux carré,* not as we know it to-day, but a mere scattering of wooden huts,

a camp in the wilderness of swamps, bayous and forest.

A parade-ground was set aside and destiny made it the Place d'Armes, Jackson Square of to-day, the "down stage" of the whole drama of New Orleans. Bienville had a pretty task before him. The river overflowed its banks, there were epidemics and hardships and discouragements without end. And to add to the poor man's anxieties, the lonely settlers clamoured for wives. An appeal for wives was sent to France, and the authorities at home, scurrying about in mad haste to meet the demands of the important new colony in Louisiana, scoured the houses of correction, the hospitals, the prisons and the streets for the much-desired wives, and sent them to the wilderness of New France. Poor Manon Lescaut was one of the pathetic brides, and although there is no record in New Orleans to prove that the Abbé Prévost founded his fiction on fact, it is at least certain that the Chevalier des Grieux is buried there, for you may see his grave, if you are curious enough about such things, to-day.

The first shipments of wives were apparently not acceptable to the better class of men among the colonists, for the Cassette girls, dowered by the king of France with a little *cassette* of linen

and fine raiment, were sent later to the Ursuline nuns to be chaperoned and then married with a not too indecent haste. The Ursulines must have had their hands full if all the girls were as pretty as Manon and all the colonists as ardent as the Chevalier des Grieux!

After that, the lively history of the place was varied by the coming and going of this governor and that governor, the building of forts and the expulsion of the Jesuit priests, who had established themselves in the town. And in 1762 France, with a sudden cessation of interest in her colony, ceded Louisiana to Spain. When one considers that Louisiana began at the Mississippi and ended, more or less indefinitely, at the Rocky Mountains, France seems to have been even recklessly generous! The Creoles very naturally resented the transfer and sent up a howl of protest. But Louis XV had wires of his own to pull. He said nothing, silence being the better part of discretion, and a Spanish governor, Ulloa, arrived at New Orleans. It took five years for the resentment of the Creoles to reach the boiling point; then they ousted Ulloa and might have joined the British-American colonies of the North if the fiery Don Alessandro O'Reilly, with three thousand troops, fifty pieces of artillery and twenty-four ships,

had not arrived to discipline the unruly colonists. He began his tirade by shooting six of the most rebellious spirits and imprisoning six more in the unsavoury dungeons of Morro Castle. He believed in thoroughness, this Spanish-Irish Don Alessandro O'Reilly!

During the Spanish possession the crude, ill-paved and badly drained town planned by Bienville was destroyed by fire. The *vieux carré* of to-day is the Spanish town which rose from the ashes of the old French settlement, so that we owe the adobe and stuccoed brick walls, the arcades and cool inner courts, the iron balconies and tiled roofs to Spanish and not to French influence.

We should be particularly grateful to one public-spirited Spaniard, Don Almonaster y Roxas, who built the St. Louis Cathedral and the splendid old Hall of the Cabildo facing the wide, open space which was then known as the Place d'Armes and has been renamed Jackson Square to suit the American tongues of the present generation.

The Cabildo houses an interesting collection of Indian relics and colonial antiques. In the Sala Capitular on the second floor, Louisiana was ceded from Spain to France and from France to the United States. But I scarcely

paused on the stairway to glance at the portrait of La Salle in a curled wig and armour, or to look at the paintings of Bienville and Iberville, fathers of the delectable New Orleans. I hurried past them because I knew that the Antommarchi death-mask of Napoleon was upstairs in one of the salons facing the Place d'Armes. Allan followed, helping the lover of New Orleans to negotiate the stairs as nimbly as the piece of German shrapnel allowed. And when we were all three bending over the glass case where the mask is displayed, we gasped, for we might have been looking at the quiet face of the Little Corporal himself.

"How like," the lover of New Orleans said in a gentle voice, "how amazingly like him!" And then smiled at his own assumption of familiarity.

The head lies against a dark background of velvet or some soft stuff, and it is startlingly lifelike, almost palpitant in its extraordinary reality. It seemed to us the face of a young man. The cheek bones are broad, the chin powerful, thrust forward and deeply dented. The mouth is open, the lips drawn back from the teeth in a half smile, a shadowy, indistinct, fleeting smile touched with irony and with tenderness. The eyes are full-lidded and deeply sunk, either from pain or weariness or in the strange metamorpho-

sis of death. The nose is magnificent. It is an heroic nose, a nasal extremity worthy of an epic poem; it springs grandly from the forehead, the nostrils are clean-cut and spirited; the whole structure, like noble architecture, inspires awe and admiration. We prostrated ourselves before Dr. Antommarchi's record of that superb olfactory organ, Allan comparing it to Emma Eames', the lover of New Orleans ranking it with Novelli's, and I claiming for it a place in the sun with Scotti's incomparable nose.

If Nicholas Girod, mayor of New Orleans, had had his way, New Orleans might have possessed the body, as well as the death-mask of the Emperor. Girod was an ardent Napoleonist and a bitter enemy of England. With Captain Bossière and a few other sympathisers, he actually attempted to cheat the English, St. Helena and death. Girod built a house at the corner of St. Louis and Chartres Streets and furnished it for Napoleon's use. Bossière equipped a fast clipper, the *Seraphine,* for the voyage of rescue to St. Helena. The crew was engaged, Bossière was in possession of maps and plans of the harbour and coast defences of the prison-island, and the magnificent adventure might have been put through to a glorious finish if death had not snatched away the prize. The

news of Napoleon's passing reached New Orleans three days before the *Seraphine* and the adventurous Bossière were ready to sail. Bossière, of course, was broken-hearted; he had dreamed so long of freeing his idol from a detestable bondage and bringing him across the ocean in the *Seraphine* to an expectant and devoted New Orleans, to freedom, to the simple luxury of Nicholas Girod's gift-house, and to peace among friends! If Napoleon had reached America, it is not at all improbable that New Orleans, and not Paris, would have claimed his body and the right to build his tomb. He would have been on French soil, after all!

We left the Cabildo and went out into Jackson Square to wander up and down the sunny paths between the neat plots of grass and flowers laid out by the Baroness Pontalba, daughter of that public-spirited Andalusian, Don Almonaster y Roxas, who was fired by the paternal longing to beautify New Orleans. For she built the double row of houses flanking the square, and with a likable and pardonable pride, had her initials, A. P., interwoven into the intricate patterns of the beautiful iron balconies. The buildings have fallen into decay, and where they are occupied at all, the tenants seem to rejoice in hanging their wash on the balconies to dry.

The fastidious Baroness, if she were to return to New Orleans to-day, would not recognise the Pontalba estate. Jackson Square was the heart of the old city; but modern New Orleans wears her heart on her sleeve over in Canal Street, and the drowsy little square was deserted except for a few derelicts who had set up light-housekeeping on the public benches.

We went over to the French Market, hoping to capture a little of the local colour that every other traveller has encountered among the vegetable and fruit stalls of the old *Halle de Boucheries.* But the Creole has abandoned the market to the Italian small grocer. Natives of Reggio, Calabria and the Abruzzi answered my feeble French questions with blank stares or torrents of absolutely unintelligible Calabrese. One black-eyed son of Italy posed for my camera, holding a roach delicately between thumb and forefinger. It was the biggest roach I have ever seen, and I am thinking of sending the photograph to the lover of New Orleans to prove that although his city is rat-proof, and mosquito-proof, it is not by any means roach-proof.

Allan refused to take any interest in cabinet photographs of French Market roaches. He established himself on a barrel of apples and made colour-sketches of the long, pillared mar-

ket, the stands of fruits and vegetables, the sunny, cobbled streets beyond. His audience, expecting to see lifelike portraits of silver-skinned onions, smiting radishes, emerald-green cabbages, golden oranges and yellow beans, hung over his shoulder and marvelled, and was vaguely disappointed, at cubistic swirls and whirligigs of colour. If you are going to paint in public, and want to be popular with the mob, you should try to keep Picasso out of your work.

"That," said one long-moustached fruit vendor, he of the roach, looking over Allan's shoulder with a critical air and pointing with his little finger at a daub of red, "is the Signora Romano of the vegetable stand. I recognise her shawl. It is," he added, winking at me, "a speaking likeness."

"You are mistaken," a little fellow who was standing on tiptoe interrupted. "The red spot is the wheel of the carriage that stands outside in the street. I see the spokes, and the left ear of the horse just beyond."

There was a shout of laughter and Allan closed his pochade box with a snap. "I'll show you," he said, looking fierce and knitting his brows, "that I can draw a picture of your Signora Romano and your red cart and your lop-eared horse that the great-grandmother of all

three will recognise and venerate. Tell Signora Romano to sit where she is and not to move on the pain of death. And some one see that the horse and cart stays put."

Thereupon he filled his mouth with pencils, and while the fruit vendor shouted to the Signora Romano to hold fast and not to wink an eye for ten minutes, the insulted artist turned out an Art Students' League chromo that created a sensation in the French Market. He drew every buckle on the lop-eared horse's harness, he reproduced the pattern on Signora Romano's red shawl, he painted the portrait of every scarlet-cheeked apple and crusty potato and feather-topped celery head that came between him and his line of vision. A chorus of "Ohs" and "Ahs," ecstatic and appreciative, rose from the Market as the awful masterpiece progressed.

"It is the Signora's nose, her very mouth, her eyes——"

And then a shout to the rigid and blushing Signora, "Don't move! The gentleman is reproducing the mole on your cheek!"

The Signora, stiffening, gave herself to immortality.

When it was finished, Allan plucked the pencils out of his mouth and presented the work of art to the Market. He accepted his triumph

in a moody silence and muttered, as soon as we were beyond earshot, "Shades of Cellini and Giotto! The Italians of to-day have drifted into an artistic backwater. What a fool I was not to make them swallow what is good for them!"

But the lover of New Orleans and I shouted with laughter all the way back to Jackson Square, although Allan's depression lasted still further and couldn't be done away with until the paternal waiter at the Louisiane had restored both self-respect and good humour by serving three "Smiles," cocktails calculated to warm the heart of the most misunderstood artist in the world.

"I am sorry," the lover of New Orleans said, as we came out into the street again, vastly cheered, "that you have heard so much Italian and so little French spoken in the *vieux carré*. Creole French is full of an ingratiating softness. Like the English of New England and the French of Canada, it has remained practically unchanged, except for the inevitable colloquialisms, since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; it is strangely affected, too, by the dialect of the Creole negroes, whose speech is a mad jumble of African and French, and is unintelligible except to the initiated. The Creole negro is a strange concoction; he may be a 'modern

nigger' as far as the eye can penetrate him, but in his soul of souls he is still a prey to terrifying superstitions. Voudouism may have been put under the ban of the police, but it is still existent. To stamp out witchcraft of that sort would mean stamping out the ignorance of the negro soul. I have seen some of their rites; they chant, they eat loathsome brews, they dance themselves into a cataleptic state. If you have seen Ridgely Torrance's 'Granny Maumee' you know how dangerous such frenzies of hate and terror can be. Beauregard Square used to be the place where the negroes gathered to go through their detestable orgies. It was called Congo Square in the old days, for the Voudou rites and dances were brought by the first slaves from Africa."

We thought that the grisly past of Congo Square made going there a futile pilgrimage unless we could see a Voudou séance ourselves. But the lover of New Orleans assured us that the lid had not only been clamped down on absinthe, or for that matter on any sort of a drink on Sunday, but on the faintest suspicion of Congo orgies. A negro, to keep strictly within the law, must boil his toads and snakes in the privacy of his own home, and he may not build sacrificial fires or brew poisons or "throw a hoodoo" unless he does it behind closed doors.

So long as the sensitive police do not see the affair, it may go on. But woe betide the Voudou Queen who cavorts in public!

The lover of New Orleans, seeing that we were in a state of mind for horrors, piloted us down Bourbon Street to see the Haunted House, where a certain Madame Lalaurie, a society woman of charm and influence, amused herself in her moments of leisure by torturing her slaves. She tied them to the walls with heavy iron chains, she flogged them and bruised and starved them. Afterwards, with a tender smile and an air of great sweetness, she descended to her beautiful drawing-room and entertained the élite of New Orleans society. And the pretty sport might have gone on indefinitely if one of the slaves had not set fire to the straw pallet of her miserable bed and brought the fire department and the light of publicity to the scandal. Madame Lalaurie escaped, fortunately for her own good, since a mob had gathered to burn, pillage and lay waste her home and to tear the gentle Lalaurie herself into ribbons. She somehow got to France and disgraced charity by becoming charitable, and died, we hope, in despair.

We might have stayed in the *vieux carré* forever, pursuing such stories, and many roguish

and pleasant ones, from street to street and from house to house. But we had engaged passage to New York on a certain steamer called the *Concho* sailing from Galveston in a day or so. We had to go on. And that is the penalty of being a tourist. The tickets were in the leather pocket-book in Allan's vest pocket; the *Concho* apparently held to a rigid schedule and couldn't be bribed to wait over until we had exhausted the fascinations of those sixty squares of Creole town.

We walked for the last time through the narrow streets, and heard the real New Orleans singing little love songs behind her open windows, saw her flirting lazily in her courtyards, dined with her for the last time at Antoine's and then fell into a taxi-cab, reeled across the city on two wheels and caught the El Paso express by the fraction of a second.

CHAPTER XII

GALVESTON, THE OPTIMIST

AFTER the train left New Orleans it ambled in a leisurely way along the banks of the river as if it were looking for a good place to wade across. The long search piqued our curiosity for we knew that the most courageous trestle in the world could scarcely straddle the rushing Mississippi. While most of the passengers stowed themselves away behind the swaying green curtains of their berths, we preferred to stay awake and to see the manner of our crossing.

If La Salle and Iberville and Bienville could have witnessed the miracle of an express train being ferried across the mighty river that whirled their fragile craft towards the Gulf like jetsam, they would have known that man was destined to conquer the Mississippi, to hold it in leash and to make it do his bidding. We stopped at a small station at the water's edge and, with nothing more startling than a slight jerk and a bump, the long train was divided into sec-

tions and put aboard a barge. The drowsy passengers did not even bother to look out of the windows, but Allan and I, unused to such spectacles, left the Pullman altogether and watched the crossing from the deck of the ponderous ferry.

Night had snuffed out earth and sky in a stiffling blanket of darkness, and we could see nothing at first but the two powerful tugs that drew us across the river and the towering superstructure of the barge, where a watchful pilot paced back and forth like a sea captain on the bridge of a ship. We went forward, baffled and furious, and sought compensation for the blackness of the night in watching the locomotive. The big monster was as tranquil as a drowsy cab-horse and tended by a solicitous engineer who rubbed and oiled his steed with tenderness and enthusiasm. I shouted to Allan above the thundering reverberations of steam and the rushing of water, "I can't see *anything!* Where is the Mississippi?"

"Under us," Allan answered.

Providence must have heard my groan of despair for a great scarlet disc of a moon appeared magically on the horizon and rose like a whirling pin-wheel of light, trailing fiery reflections across the wide expanse of the river. We saw

the Mississippi from bank to bank, rolling grandly down to the Gulf, inexpressibly romantic and beautiful and unforgettable. Providence had arranged a spectacular *finis* to our fog-befuddled journey; it was tardy generosity perhaps, but we were properly grateful, watching the magnificent décor until the ferry bumped gently against the shore again and we were warned by a dervish of a conductor frantically swinging a lantern that if we didn't "get aboard" we would be abandoned by the El Paso express altogether.

I made no feint at going to sleep, for as soon as the train was safely ashore again and hitched together in its proper sequence, we spun magnificently across Louisiana, Louisiana illuminated by Providence's moon, no longer scarlet but icy white and as penetratingly brilliant as a spot-light. I have an unfortunate enthusiasm for new country. There are people, I know, who can sleep soundly in a train that is crossing Umbria or climbing the Semmering or rushing magnificently across the American desert. And I hate them for their indifference while I envy them their somnolence.

"Mr. Foster" had managed to get compartments for us and a spotless darkey in a white coat "made up" my berth with such cunning art

that I should have gone to sleep at once to show my appreciation of his handiwork. If we could only apprentice our housemaids to Pullman porters! Might it not be a money-making scheme for some ebony white-coated potentate to start a correspondence school for scientific bed-making? A Pullman porter folds sheets just as a hotel waiter folds napkins—there are crêpey irregularities and fan plaitings and decorative creases. A Pullman porter knows to a nicety the exact angle of a blanket, the exact adjustment of a fat, snow white pillow. When the master bed-maker of the El Paso express had backed discreetly out of the compartment, wishing me a "very" good night, I surveyed his handiwork with a pang of regret, for I did not intend to lie in it. I lay, rather, upon it, with the pillow tucked cosily behind my head. Then I turned out the light and raised the window curtain.

We were rushing smoothly across vast fields. Long ditches of shallow water, shining like threads of platinum in the white moonlight, pointed in oddly converging lines towards the horizon. The moon had climbed swiftly, like an ambitious society woman, and was sailing serenely overhead, crystal clear in a starless sky. I watched for an hour. Plain and sky and il-

limitable horizon. . . . I watched another hour —plain and sky—Texas perhaps. . . .

Then I fell asleep.

We were in Houston when I woke and it was dawn, a nice, fresh dawn prettily tinted with fleecy, gold-lined clouds. Allan was already dressed and standing on the station platform haloed by clouds of cigarette smoke and in animated conversation with the fattest conductor I have ever seen. They were reading the latest war news in the Houston morning paper and I heard the fat conductor say that *he* would be afraid to go by steamer to New York, "what with the U-boats and raiders." Allan reminded him that war had not been declared, but the conductor had a low opinion of German military methods.

"You can't count on 'em," he said in a lugubrious voice. "They're just as apt as not to sink you before you get to Key West. Travellin' alone?"

Allan confessed that he had a sister in tow.

"Ain't she afraid?"

Allan thought not.

"Well, if *I* were you and had a sister, I'd go back by train. They'll get you as sure as my name's Spencer Jones."

This was professional railroad advice and

Allan said stoutly that the sea was good enough for him, raiders or no raiders, U-boats or no U-boats; he would rather take his chances in the *Concho* than be blown to pieces by dynamite or some railroad bridge in the Middle West. The fat conductor, who apparently considered us both lost, waddled away mumbling, "They'll get you! You watch out. Never saw a German yet who wasn't quick on the trigger."

All we saw of Houston, as we pulled slowly out of it again, was forlorn and ugly. Workmen, heavy-eyed and morose, plodded to work; some of them paused by the tracks to watch the train, perhaps envious of its freedom, but none of them seemed aware of the magnificent sunrise that was doing its best to glorify the drab factories and warehouses and to transform the first hour of the long day. It is a pity that railroads enter cities by the back door, for it would have been much nicer, for us at least, if the El Paso express had passed through Houston's residential streets. Instead, like a shame-faced tramp, it picked its way through dreary slums and forlorn, untidy yards.

The approach to Galveston is a spectacular exception to the general rule, however. The casual tourist is entranced before he has fairly arrived at the station, for a two-mile causeway

has been thrown out from Galveston Island to the Texas mainland. Superlatives are the order of the day before Galveston itself has appeared on the horizon and superlatives continue to be in demand as long as one remains in the city. Like Messina, Galveston has been built and rebuilt upon the ruins of itself; it has withstood wind, water and fire; it has been blown down, flooded and burned, not once but several times. And always it has emerged triumphant, the people labouring with the tireless patience of ants to cover up the ruin and to forget the cataclysm.

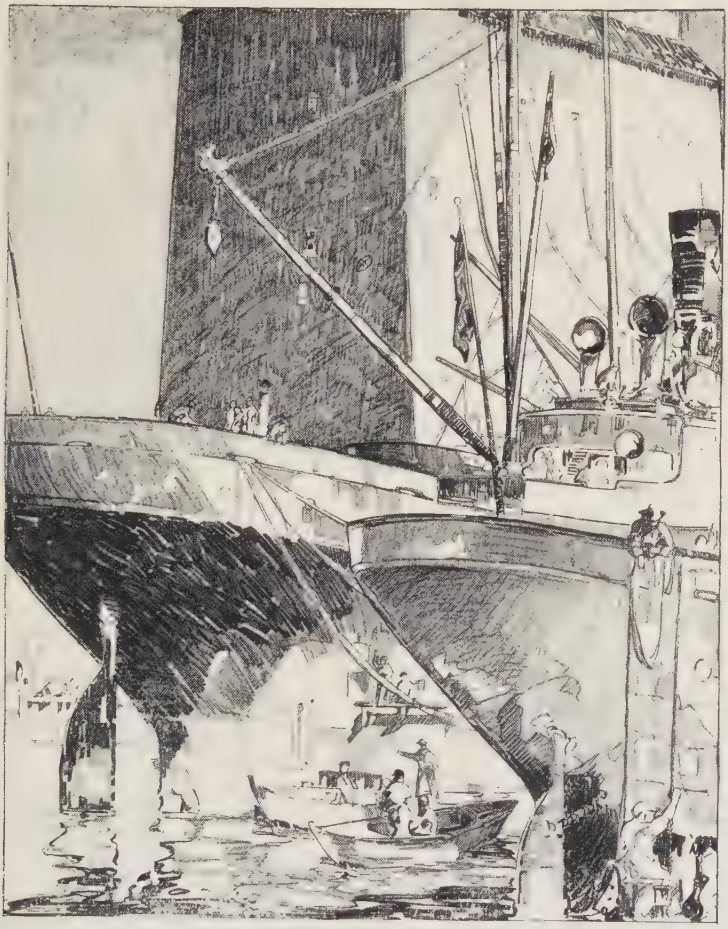
It is not considered good form to mention hurricanes and tidal waves in Galveston; the city resents any discussion of her secret infirmity. The year 1900 is skipped lightly over by local historians and the penny guide books and advertising pamphlets date everything from 1902. Curious tourists are not supposed to notice the discrepancy; but it becomes conspicuous when one learns that the whole city of Galveston was raised nineteen feet—houses, streets, sidewalks, sewers, parks and all—not very long after that curious omission. Why, one asks, should a modern city have been lifted bodily nineteen feet into the air unless the inhabitants had an expensive desire to look down upon the Gulf of Mexico? And eventually, whether the tourist comes

from New England or East Africa, he learns the truth.

For Galveston has an implacable enemy. Like Torre Annunziata and Herculaneum, the great seaport lives in the shadow of possible destruction. The first storm, which tore across the Gulf like a devastating fury in September, 1900, practically destroyed the city. Wind, tidal wave, flood and fire! Small wonder that Galveston still shudders at the memory and refuses to dwell upon it! Baedeker (whom I should not have consulted, considering the tender state of German-American sentiment) puts the number of victims at an indefinite six or eight thousand. The actual toll does not matter. We do know that houses were unroofed, smashed to splinters, reduced to atoms before the mad onslaught of the hurricane; we do know that Galveston was cut off from the mainland by terrific seas, and buried under a wall of water. We do know that people drowned like rats in their houses or floated out into the Gulf to perish miserably there. And we agree with Galveston that the wretched details of all that terror and death and destruction are best forgotten. Galveston determined to go on; the remnant of the population, under the leadership of a City Commission, rebuilt the ruined town and at the same

time, with no frivolous desire to "look down" on the Gulf, but with fiery determination to get beyond its reach, the Galvestonians raised their city nineteen feet. Not content with this, as if pumping twenty millions cubic yards of sand into the city were a mean accomplishment, a concrete sea wall five miles long, seventeen feet high and sixteen feet wide was built along the water-front—a barrier calculated to rebuff the most impudent tidal wave in the world. To cap the climax, Galveston was so certain that she had conquered her enemy that she built a million dollar hotel directly behind the sea wall. Then she sat back, folded her hands and said, "Let the wind howl and the sea rage. Galveston is secure."

There have been three storms since the epoch-making hurricane of 1900. The enraged enemy, returning to the attack during the summer of 1916, bit large pieces out of the sea wall and completely wrecked the concrete causeway which links the city to Texas. As our train crossed the tranquil stretch of water we saw the destruction. Huge slabs of concrete are tipped on end, smashed, pulverised, tossed about as if playful giants had caught them up and thrown them down again. The railroad trestle has been repaired, but the causeway has been abandoned



A GRAIN ELEVATOR, AS GRIM AND SOMBRE AS A MEDIÆVAL FORTRESS

to the enemy. Galveston said little about the storm, and I am quoting the driver of a taxi-cab (an uncerain authority) when I venture to say that over a hundred people were sacrificed. But the sea wall withstood the attack and the million dollar hotel, to quote again, not only "went on as usual with little or no interruption of service," but came out of the maelstrom intact.

There is something magnificent in this tenacity of purpose. Fancy serving six-course dinners while the black hurricane raged outside! Fancy bellboys answering bells and carrying clinking pitchers of ice water to frightened guests while the huge hotel shivered and rocked in the teeth of the gale! It makes one shudder for Galveston's destiny, for man has never defied the elements with more impudence or greater self-assurance. You may ask favours of nature, but you may never command her, and you take your life in your hands when you challenge her. Galveston's million dollar hotel says, "Come, if you dare!" I should not care to be in Galveston when nature decides to accept the challenge. But then I am afraid of wind, mortally afraid of it. I am abject and craven and detestable in a hurricane. I simply lie down and die. So I am possibly prejudiced when I warn Galves-

ton not to boast too smugly of her invincible sea wall. Every time I mention it I put down my pen and rap three times on wood. But Galveston is neither Irish nor afraid of storms. She pulls herself together after each fresh disaster, rebuilds the ruined houses, restrings the telegraph and telephone wires, buries the dead and begins again. It would not pay to abandon one of the greatest ports in the world, and Americans do not surrender so easily.

The sea was breaking gently when we were there; it beat against the enormous concrete barrier with tender little caresses, pretending friendship. But still the Gulf seemed over us, around us, unavoidable and menacing; it drew our gaze just as the slumbering Vesuvius attracts and repels the Neapolitan.

After a faultless breakfast at the million dollar hotel we drove through the city, finding little to admire beyond the magnificent courage of its inhabitants and some splendid avenues of royal palms. The driver of our taxi-cab wanted us to take the Texas Hero monument to our hearts, and there were three or four millionaires' residences that touched his simple soul with awe. He could not understand why we insisted upon driving out of the city altogether to spend an hour watching a cotton press. He

stood at our elbow and murmured invitingly that we had not seen the Public Library, the Ball School or the City Park. . . .

But the cotton press was more entertaining than a city full of endowed hospitals and public schools, and we added to the taxi-cab driver's æsthetic confusion by lingering in its vicinity long enough for Allan to sketch the press at work. A cotton press is a machine gifted with uncanny intelligence and the strength of a god. It catches a roughly packed bale of cotton, tosses it neatly into the exact centre of a woven container, presses it between two enormous steel slabs, ejects it and reaches for another. There are no variations in its precise and graceful motions. Negro workmen step between the presses to thread and secure the containers, unconcerned and facile, singing softly. And one misstep, one miscalculation would roll them out as flat and as featureless as pancakes!

The *Concho* sailed at noon, so we tore ourselves away and hurried to the dock, stopping long enough in the city to buy a dozen collars for Allan and a long veil for me. A neat trio of Haytian stewards fell on our luggage and carried it aboard, stowing us away in comfortable cabins on the main deck. A handful of guardsmen and some romantic looking Mexicans

in wide-brimmed sombreros shared the forward deck in amicable proximity. "Villa, dead or alive" had brought the guardsmen to Texas and "higher wages, dead or alive" was the bait that had lured the Mexicans northward toward snow and ice and undreamed of hardships.

Promptly at noon the little steamer backed away from Galveston, turned right about face and headed for the Gulf. Behind us we could see the plucky city, still touched by the tragedy of the past, strangely unstable, transient and weird. We drifted slowly along the water-front, passing beneath a towering grain elevator, as grim and sombre as a mediæval fortress. There were compact rows of docks and wharves, where ships crowded to load and unload—freighters, tramps, schooners, and two big English steamers painted grey from bow to stern. We waved our hats and cheered the British Jack. At last we *could!* The English crews, as dingy grey as their ships, waved back and shouted to us

"Don't let the Germans get you, Sammy!"

The Baratarian pirate, Jean La Fitte, was not alive, but we were no more secure in the *Concho* than we would have been in a Spanish galleon in the days of Count Bernardo de Galvez, Spanish Viceroy of Mexico and patron saint of Galveston. . . .

"Don't let the Germans get you, Sammy!"

We waved our hands and laughed. "We won't!"

And the *Concho,* ignoring such absurdities, passed the furthermost tip of Galveston Island and entered the dazzling blue of the Gulf.

CHAPTER XIII

KEY WEST AT DAWN

IT took three days and three nights to get from Galveston to Key West. The Gulf of Mexico was as unruffled as a mirror, and there was nothing to do but loll in our steamer chairs while the "tired of ages" evaporated from our spirits. The *Concho* was a steamer one somehow cottoned to on first acquaintance. She was tidy and small, comfortable but not cluttered with luxuries, and there was a total absence of that distressing vibration one feels on fast ships. The twenty-eight Mexicans who had come aboard at Galveston were bound for the frigid North to work "somewhere on the Lehigh Railroad." They lay somnolent on the forward deck with their hats over their eyes, and only wakened occasionally to fraternise with the khaki-clad guardsmen who had picked up enough pigeon-Spanish on the border to carry on a halting conversation. The guardsmen confessed to a sneaking fondness for the game little *peons,* but there

was nothing black enough in the way of adjectives to garnish their opinion of the border Texans. Their feeling toward the Mexican was more or less neutral, but their dislike of the Texan was a real and impressive thing.

Life aboard the *Concho* was delightful. It may have been the geniality of Captain McIntosh, who looked like Wallingford—Wallingford in uniform!—and was one of the finest types I have encountered in the American Merchant Marine service. It may have been the Austrian pastry-cook's triumphant cakes and pies, or the soft voices and ingratiating manners of the Dutch East Indians and Haytians in the crew. Or it may have been the sea, which never fails to tinge one's own mood with its vast impersonality. Or it may have been because the *Concho* was a small ship. The giant ocean greyhounds of ante-bellum days were meant for the timid landlubber who felt more secure, for some inexplicable reason, when there were ten stories between him and the deep. For my part, I like to hear the slap of the boisterous waves against the sides. I like to lean on the rail within nose-touch of the patterned foam rushing by in endless, dissolving repetition. I like to feel the sting of spray tossed back by the runting bow. I like to stand by the ventilators

and listen to the muffled clatter and shouting down in the boiler room. At night I like to sit on the forward deck where I can watch the mast light, like a fiery spark, swinging against the ice-blue stars. I like to be on intimate terms with the sea, never unaware of it but watchful and deliciously afraid, as I would fear an indulgent and unstable god. I like to talk now and then to the crew, and if I see the captain or the first officer squinting at sun-spots through a sextant, I like to be allowed to squint, too. I prefer a capstan to the dubious luxury of a steamer chair. I like to watch the whirling log-line and the wake churned into milky foam by the ship's swift passing. I like to lie in my berth and watch the black waves heaving above the horizon, flecked at their crests with fiery phosphorescence. And manifestly I couldn't do any of those things aboard what newspaper men call a Leviathan.

Three days and three nights passed slowly in a procession of lazy hours. Just after we had rounded the clawlike tip of Galveston Island we encountered a heavy ground swell which sent most of the more imaginative passengers scurrying to their berths. But once clear of that, we moved across the surface of the water like a pasteboard ship blown across a marble-topped

table. When Galveston had dropped behind the horizon, there was no further sign of life until we caught the first intermittent flashes of the Tortugas Light on the evening of the third day. A German raider was supposed to be somewhere in the neighbourhood, and although war had not yet been declared, there was a certain amount of speculation as to whether the raider might not precipitate matters if it should happen to encounter such a neat, staunch, fat little morsel as the *Concho*. Three of the twelve Germans in the *Concho's* crew had left the ship at Galveston to cross the Texan border and go into Mexico, probably because they had definite work to do there for Germany. The Austrian pastry-cook, author of the culinary masterpieces I have mentioned before, sat in the galley door between his moments of inspiration, looking as melancholy as a man can look who is a mountain of fat, as pale as dough and clad in a sleeveless flannel shirt and an apron. When I had passed him several times in my pacing around the deck and each time had discovered him with his shaven head buried in his arms, I sought the chief steward and asked him why a talented pastry-cook should abandon himself publicly to grief. Were the Germans in the crew planning to scuttle the ship? And did the pastry-cook

know about it? Or was he weeping for his government's sins? It seemed to me an exaggerated case of conscience.

"He is afraid of internment," the steward explained. "God knows why, for turn about has never been fair play in America, but that poor devil had visions of another Wittenberg. He owns a little farm in New Jersey, and in the summer time he leaves the *Concho* and potters about in his vegetable garden. As far as he can understand, that is all over for him. He expects to be nabbed and put behind a wire enclosure as soon as we touch the pier in New York. And I tell you," the steward assured me with a grave face, "it is having a bad effect on his pastry. I wish I could convince him somehow. The cherry tarts weren't up to the standard to-day."

After that, I lost interest in the desserts. It always seemed to me that they were flavoured with Austrian tears. In spite of my affection for Austria, I couldn't quite stick a lachrymose souvenir, and the cook was a prey to his terror all the way to New York.

The monotony of the placid Gulf was unbroken save for schools of flying fish that skimmed the surface of the water like little skipping-stones and disappeared again in a hoop of

DOLPHINS CAVORTED AT SUNSET, TURNING BEAUTIFUL SOMERSAULTS

ripples. Portuguese men-o'-war sailed past in squadrons. They looked like large opalescent bubbles, but they were amazingly brisk and intelligent for jellyfish. With the sail-like membrane attached to their backs they contrived to come about, to tack, to run before the wind—in short, to behave like full-rigged ships. I take off my hat to a jellyfish that knows enough to jibe! Dolphins cavorted at sunset, turning beautiful somersaults—the most likable and roguish fellows in the sea. And always there was an escort of white-breasted gulls following close astern.

As I was the only lady in the first cabin, the stewardess was pathetically devoted to me. Probably because the poor woman was bored and had nothing better to do, she gave her undivided attention to getting me out of bed at seven in the morning. On the stroke of the minute she applied herself to my door.

"Miss, breakfast is served."

"What on earth do you want?" was my greeting, muffled by as much of the sheet as I could draw over my head, for I hate to be stared at at seven o'clock in the morning.

The stewardess always pretended to be sympathetic after the manner of her kind. She manœuvred to unearth me from under the sheet.

"I do believe you are seasick. And on a calm day, too! Aren't you ashamed?"

"I've never been seasick in my life. Go away, and shut the door!"

"Breakfast is ready, Miss."

"But I don't want breakfast at seven o'clock. Go away!"

"Your brother is on deck, Miss. He's been up and out for an hour." (That was a gross exaggeration!) "He told me to tell you that you are missing everything and how could you expect to write a book if you sleep all day?"

"He said that?"

"He did, indeed."

"Well, go away! I *want* to sleep."

"There is corn-bread for breakfast, Miss." And so on, until she had accomplished her purpose.

I have only one thing to thank her for. She got me out of bed in time to go ashore at Key West. We had caught sight of Tortugas' sultry flashes late on Monday night, and had passed the light sixty-six miles from Key West while we slept. I knew little of Tortugas except that it has played the rôle of an American St. Helena for several prisoners—among them the doctor who cared for J. Wilkes Booth and who was supposed to have been a conspirator in the

assassination of Lincoln. The stewardess woke me at dawn with the magic words, "Key West in twenty minutes, Miss!" And before she had fairly opened the door I was on my feet.

"All right, I'm coming. Twenty minutes, did you say?"

Key West! The Cayo Hueso of the Spaniards! The jumping-off place; America's furthest south—a city to touch the imagination! By the time I got out on deck the first faint blue of dawn had spread over the sky. The *Concho* had slowed down until the vibrations of the screw sounded like a muffled heart beat. Key West lay just ahead, a long string of lights that drifted toward us across the water. Puffs of hot, moist wind brought the odour of the wharves—the inexplicable smell of the land. And suddenly, as the blue light deepened, we saw bulky shadows, vague outlines of houses and sheds, a ghostly wireless tower. We heard the water lapping the wharf piles, voices, the liquid laughter of black men and a chorus of yapping dogs.

"Hi, there, *Concho!*"

"Hi, you!"

And as if a veil had been whisked away, we saw the wharf just under us and a row of people staring up and waving. The mongrel dogs kept

up their infernal howling or piled themselves in tangled heaps, snapping and tearing each others' ears into ribbons. I have never seen such outcasts, such forlorn pariahs of the dog world. Slinking, cowardly, shivering—they alternately raised their begging eyes to the row of faces along the *Concho's* rail and squatted miserably to scratch.

Key West is the terminus of the Florida East Coast Railway, and the joining of the island city to the rest of Florida by a series of trestles, bridges and concrete viaducts thrown from key to key has brought Cuba to within ninety miles of the American mainland. The trip from Key West to Havana takes no longer than the customary channel passage, and is supposed to be one of the most expensive short crossings anywhere in the world. Only one meal is served during the trip, and as the bit of water between Key West and Havana is usually as rough as the English Channel in mid-winter, the serving of that one meal is more or less of an empty formality. As one discouraged tourist told me, "The trip to Havana is on a par with the ascent of Vesuvius—it costs a fortune to go, but it costs three times a fortune to get back again. The Cuban learns the verb *to extort,* even if he pretends ignorance of the verb *to cheat*—and he

can conjugate the verb *to wheedle* in every one of its ninety-nine tenses."

The engineering feat which put Key West conspicuously on the map of Florida and brought passengers and freight trains literally "overseas" to Cuba's front door, is one of the most dramatic and spectacular things railroading has ever accomplished, the climax of the Flagler system's exploitation of the South. Florida dwindles at its furthermost tip into a loosely-strung chain of small coralline islands, some of them habitable, some of them simply ridges of fluted sand, called keys or *cayos,* which divide the Gulf of Mexico from the Straits of Florida for over a hundred miles. The railroad jumps from key to key with the ease of a colossus straddling the globe. Part of the time the concrete arches and ponderous trestles rise directly out of the water, so that the approach to Key West is not unlike the approach to Venice from Mestre, except that the Venetian viaduct is always linked with the shore on one hand and the city on the other, while the Overseas track seems to plunge straight out to sea with no apparent objective but the horizon. Some of the white natives of the Bahama Islands have settled in the Florida keys and are called Conchs, a name which suits them to perfection. They are

nearly always fishermen, for they live in a piscatorial paradise, a sort of happy-hunting-ground for the confirmed angler. The waters of the keys are swarming with every known variety of fish from the mild and gentle nibbler to the gamest deep-sea monster. I should think that a fisherman would have to do little more than whistle for his living down there. Key West is famous for its turtle soup, made from the big deep-sea turtles which are caught in the neighbourhood. But after I had seen the pathetic, ugly, unwieldy creatures on the docks, with their flat feet pierced and tied together with ropes, I could not have managed a spoonful of the detestable potage. The turtles were brought in by the hundreds and crucified in the most revolting and ghastly manner; the twisting of their parrot-like heads, the futile and agonised wavings of their legs, their grotesque sufferings have made turtle soup forever an impossibility as far as I am concerned. And oh, the smell of turtles, dead turtles, drying turtles, turtles in their death agonies, turtles spliced and bound, but still alive, for shipment! The odour assailed us as soon as we docked at Key West, and I was not happy until a broad expanse of water and a fresh breeze had dimmed the memory of it and made breathing endurable again. I cannot understand the

æsthetic reasoning which shows you a wharf full of stinking, tortured turtles and then says, "Now you must eat our turtle soup! We pride ourselves that here in Key West you may taste the uttermost essence of turtle soup, the masterpiece, the climax!" Undoubtedly. But I reeled past the temptation, holding the tip of my nose.

Every traveller we had met in the South had consistently blackened Key West's reputation. It was dirty, the people were mongrel, the taxicabs were rusty, the hotels were bad, there was nothing on earth to see but a banyan tree. "Don't go there," we had been told, "unless you are sure you can get out again in twenty-four hours." It is apparently fashionable to call Key West dirty, just as it was fashionable to say of Venice, in those dim, legendary days before the war, "Venice is beautiful, my dear, but *how* the canals *smell!*" One gives with the left hand and takes away with the right. The truth of the matter is, Venice doesn't smell except in the sultry dog-days of August and September, and Key West—at dawn—isn't dirty at all. I almost hesitate to make the statement for fear I will be called unobservant; Key West is so overwhelmingly accused of slovenliness!

Perhaps the freshness of the dawn purified the city; perhaps the heavy dews of the semi-tropi-

cal night had washed it clean. Whatever the reason was, Key West sparkled for us. We took an automobile driven by a dark, flashing and very black-eyed Cuban boy who was lying in wait for possible tourists from the *Concho* just outside the entrance to the wharf. The miserable dogs followed us, whining and begging and snapping until we had climbed into the machine. The Cuban scattered the poor creatures by starting the car with a terrific jerk and an ear-splitting squawk of the horn. A fresh breeze had come up with the increasing light of day—very cool and invigorating, life-giving after the stifling calm of the night. It fluttered out the ends of my veil so that they flapped like a sail as we turned away from the water-front and entered the city. The sky was still untouched by the direct rays of the sun; the blue had given way to a luminous pearl-grey and the horizon was banked with broken thunder clouds, jagged and blue-black, which sprang toward the arch of the sky like torn pennants. Key West was asleep. The blinds were shut like lids over tired eyes. The shutters of the shops were closed; there were no motors, no horses, no pedestrians on the street; even the big, sulphur-yellow Flagler hotel looked absolutely deserted and empty,

as forlorn and dreary as a summer hotel in mid-winter.

The Cuban boy asked us where we wanted to go. We had no idea. We told him to take us "around Key West," and that we wanted to see everything there was to see. He looked doubtful, as if he would have preferred being given a definite destination. Responsibility is irksome to a handsome boy, but being asked to entertain two insane travellers who wanted to look at a city before daybreak taxed this one's indulgence. He considered the thing a moment as if he wondered what on earth he could show us at that God-forsaken hour. Then his face brightened.

"There's the banyan tree," he said.

"Is that all there is in Key West?" I demanded.

Æsthetically there was apparently nothing else. The banyan tree at Key West carries a heavy burden. Like St. Peter's, it must never disappoint the pilgrim. We decided to wait until after dawn to see it, for we felt that such a tourist-sop must be as self-conscious as the Sphinx. Faint puffs of rosy light were beginning to touch the peaks of the thunder clouds on the horizon, so we told the Cuban that the

banyan tree could wait for the sunrise. He must take us out of the city.

There is a single main street (which is not really a slip of the pen, for most cities have main streets crossing each other at right angles), and we followed it to the outskirts of Key West where the one and two-storied frame houses thinned out into a fringe of pretty bungalows and more pretentious private houses. In the luminous light the green of the gardens was intensified a hundred times so that every leaf and blade of grass was unnaturally brilliant in hue. We passed a cottage which was buried under an avalanche of purple bougainvillea. The streets were clear of people and of dust, and we rushed smoothly forward against the boisterous wind as if we were the only living creatures on the face of the earth. The road passed the last of the bungalows, ran close to two large cigar factories where, for a moment, we could smell the fragrant, sweet odour of tobacco, and then curved away toward the sea again between fields and a tangled growth of scrub and hardy, shiny-leaved bushes. The young Cuban urged the motor up to forty-five and we spun magnificently toward the sunrise.

Gold flakes of light sprayed up from behind the purple thunder heads and floated to the very

apex of the sky to gild every wisp and shred of vapour. A magnificent conflagration blazed in our eyes. The coming of the sun seemed to stir the sluggish and immovable thunder clouds into action. They rolled majestically aside like the parting of a great curtain to reveal the very heart of the burning day as it stepped over the horizon. The tumbled peaks took on magnificent shapes, thrust higher and higher, converged, parted, flattened themselves into anvil-like plateaux. The gold light turned to saffron, then to rose, then to a flaming and indescribable scarlet. And as we came within sight of the sea we saw that it had turned from black to a vivid ice-green—a Winslow Homer sea laced with sandy shoals and dotted with shallow islands.

The sun came up, like Kipling's sun, with a crash, and climbed with incredible speed above the thunder clouds. They had played their part in the morning pageant and retreated, like circus supers, over the edge of the world and out of our sight. We drove to the end of the boulevard and turned back just where the government wireless station is being built.

Groups of workmen were trudging out to the cigar manufactories as we entered the city—Cubans, swarthy and slender, Spaniards, the inevitable negro. And Key West was waking.

The boisterous wind rattled the cocoa-palms and the wide, stiff leaves of the sword-palms. Windows opened here and there and curious eyes peered at us. Shopkeepers were opening the doors of their shops or sweeping off their front steps. A drowsy night clerk stood on the porch of the Overseas Hotel and stretched himself, taking deep breaths of the morning air. The sun gilded the ugly little houses and glorified them; it was all indescribably fresh and sparkling and buoyant.

"And now," the young Cuban said, with the air of the custode of Santa Maria Novella when he opens the door of the Spanish Chapel, "I will show you the banyan tree."

He wanted us to get the full impact of the sensation, so he turned in at the barracks gate at top speed and brought us up to the banyan with a flourish. I don't know what I had expected. I remember that I had formed a mental picture of a colossus of a tree, an octupus, a maze of branches. A banyan, to me, had always meant something which begins by being a sprout and winds up as a forest. The banyan at Key West disappointed me. It did all it was supposed to do; it struck its branches down into the ground, it multiplied its trunks, it was as smooth and grey as a snake's skin. But it was not large

THE BOISTEROUS WIND RATTLED THE COCOA-PALMS

enough, and it had been whitewashed. I couldn't manage to squeeze out a superlative. I gazed on the banyan in utter, abysmal silence, aware that something was expected of me but utterly incapable of filling in the conversational gaps.

"It's the banyan," the Cuban said, making his eyes very round. And then, seeing that he had failed, he made a supreme effort. "Gee," he said with a good deal of passion, "don't you see the banyan?"

Even this left me unmoved. The Cuban gave me a savage look and left the banyan with a violent jerk. We spun out of the barracks yard on two wheels, narrowly missing the toes of a sentry on guard at the gate, who was so surprised that he saluted.

The *Concho* was "waiting breakfast" for us when we got back after a zigzag impression of Key West's shopping street. Going aboard was like returning to a comfortable home. We smiled at the familiar faces of the Haytian stewards who were leaning on the rail, all making striking contrasts of themselves by wearing crisply clean white coats. As soon as we had swallowed a cup of coffee we went on deck to watch the unloading of a huge shovel which had been lashed to the forward deck at Galveston

and had been the bane of the Captain's existence all the way across the Gulf. He stood on the bridge and roared choleric comments on the stupidity of his crew, the lateness of the hour, the heat of the day, the feebleness of the steam winch and the general cussedness of everything. While he roared, in his good-natured but perfectly effective way, the first officer became feverishly, acutely busy. He was an intense Englishman, a fellow who took everything too seriously and who invested simple duties with a profound importance. Now he stripped off his coat, knitted his brows, gave orders, promptly took them back again, hopped from one side of the deck to the other, as active and as efficient as a rabbit. The Captain leaned from the bridge, with his Wallingford cigar protruding from one corner of his mouth like a torpedo projectile, and added colour to the moment with a few rumbling and highly picturesque suggestions.

The big shovel rose inch by inch clear of the deck, the ropes and chains that held it screeching and shrieking under the strain. A long line of negroes on the wharf below tugged to swing the obstinate mass of iron away from the ship. They grunted and laughed—big, black fellows in blue jeans and tattered shirts, barefooted, inconceivably lazy. They laid hold of the rope

with their powerful hands and swayed and jerked in unison.

While we watched, a tall, bullet-headed negro in a bathing-suit appeared on the wharf and offered to dive for us.

"Gimme a quarter!" he shouted, "gimme a quarter! Down heah. In the water. Quick! Gimme a quarter, please, sir." Then he capered and grinned and made wide gestures. "Watch me dive. Dive foh a quarter. Down heah. Right heah in the water. Throw it, please, sir!"

There was no resisting him. He scrambled to the top of one of the wharf piles and balanced there a moment, looking like a wet codfish. The quarter flashed through the air and he dived after it, as straight and clean a dive as any I have ever seen. For an instant his squirming black body hung below the surface of the water, then he came up, spluttering and laughing, with the quarter between his teeth. He was aware of his talents, for when one of the stewards threw him a dime he let it sink slowly out of sight without stirring a muscle to dive for it.

At half-past nine, the shovel having been dumped on the wharf, much to the relief of the crew, the *Concho* churned her way backwards into Key West Harbour. As she turned slowly around, swinging her nose towards the Straits

of Florida, we saw Cayo Hueso for the first time, the mysterious, turtle-backed island where the Spanish sailors and explorers found nothing but human bones—the Key West of to-day. It rose out of the smiting green of the shallow water like a tropical mirage, veiled in hot mists, linked to America by the far-flung viaduct and still as remote and strange as only a city in the sea can be.

We passed the destroyer No. 20 and a big South American tramp on their way into the harbour. Small fishing schooners and launches bobbed in our wake. At noon, Key West had dropped behind the horizon. We followed the Keys northward until sunset. And that night, as we lounged in our deck chairs after dinner, we saw the diamond strung lights of Palm Beach.

CHAPTER XIV

WIND, WAVES AND HOME AGAIN

WE had taken aboard a handful of passengers at Key West—some sea captains, the crew of a wrecked schooner, a tourist or two and a trio of gamblers. The gamblers sat like poisonous spiders in the smoke-room and lured first one and then another of the male passengers of the *Concho* into a losing game of cards. They all played and they all lost. And they all played again!

The captain of the wrecked schooner, a little wisp of a man, went on ridding himself of his worldly goods at the rate of fifteen dollars a game until the sleek gamblers had emptied the pockets of his decent blue serge clothes. The Swedish first mate, who had been twice "torpedoed" in the English Channel and who should have developed a bump of caution, was drawn to the smoke-room irresistibly. My chair was near the door and when I turned my head I could see the three sinister profiles of the pro-

fessional card players, pallid as Monte Carlo croupiers—one wearing the traditional spade beard, the other two smooth and shaven. And I saw the victims pass, one by one, into the flood of light that fell from the smoke-room door across the deck; I saw them pivot there, balance, and finally go in. Then, with their hats pushed back and their brows wrinkled and their eyes full of doubt and rage they played the gamblers' "simple little game" and lost and lost and lost.

Once I spoke to the Swedish first mate about it from the security of my deck chair. I had seen so many men swallowed up by the smoke-room door that I thought I would try to probe the reason.

"They're gamblers," I remarked, as the first mate hesitated there, "aren't they?"

"I know, m'am," he answered, taking a puff at his cigarette and then throwing it over the rail, a little comet-flash of fire against the darkness of the sea, "I know, ma'am, but I hate to let men like them get the best of me. Crooks, all three of 'em."

"Of course."

He hesitated a moment longer. "I'll tell you what," he volunteered. "They got all I earned comin' from Tilbury to Key West—every penny of it."

"And you are going to play again?"

"Well, you see, ma'am, I hate to let men like them get the best of me."

"They always do, don't they? You're no match for them. They travel between New York and Havana, following tourist dollars. You are small pickings for them, if you will pardon me. The money you risked your life to earn will no more than pay their passage from Key West to New York."

The first mate grinned. "Risked my life?" he repeated softly. "I should say! Twice I've started out from England in a ten thousand ton ship and have had it blown from under me." He whistled a long, slow whistle. "Yes, m'am! You might call it a risk."

"I suppose you are going back again?"

"From New York."

"Aren't you afraid?"

He shook his head. "They say in English, 'three times and out.' No, I'm not afraid."

He glanced in through the open door of the smoke-room. The three gamblers sat knee to knee, offering a "simple little game" to any one who cared to play. The first mate tipped his hat to me.

"Well," he said jauntily, "I guess I'll go in."

The wisp of a sea captain had followed him,

but since his pockets were empty he stopped in the band of light, rocked on the toes and heels of his creaking black shoes and gazed longingly after the bold first mate.

"Are you going to play?" I asked.

The wisp of a captain spun around to stare at me. "Me?" he demanded, in a startled whisper. "I borrowed fifty dollars in Key West and they got that inside of two minutes last night. No, I'm not goin' to play, m'am. But I'll tell you—if I had five hundred dollars I'd bust that combination."

"Oh," I said, pretending innocence, "do you think they're gamblers?"

"I *know* it," thundered the captain, spitting violently over the rail.

"Why don't you tell Captain McIntosh?"

"Can't catch 'em. No one could. They're eels, not men. They got my fifty dollars quick as *that,* and everything as easy and nice and honest." He shook his head. "I'd ought to have learned better, but I never seem to. I like a game. Always playing games one way or another. My schooner——"

"Your schooner? What about her? Some one said you lost her."

The captain sat down on the edge of Allan's steamer chair (Allan, of course, had been in the

smoke-room for an hour) and fixed me with his weak, watery blue eyes, eyes full of vague dreams and gentle, ineffectual longings, the eyes of a lovable failure. "I'll tell you about my schooner. I called her the *Charles Perkins* after my father. He was a captain, too, and took his ship from Maine to the Azores back in 1838. He was a man of his word, my father, and my schooner took after him, never failed me, never played me a dirty trick—as trustworthy a ship as ever you saw. But all of us gets old, and the *Charles Perkins* got old, too. Old and tired, like a human being. You remember the storm, two weeks ago?"

"Yes. We were in Pensacola."

"I was off Tortugas, in the Gulf, beating in to Key West. Middle of the night, cold, big seas. You remember?"

I said I did.

The captain shrugged his shoulders. "The *Charles Perkins,*" he said, "took it into her head that she wasn't going a step further. Yes, m'am, and she'd never failed me before. Sprung a leak and began to go down by the bow. I can't tell you how surprised I was. I couldn't see my hand before my face and I couldn't hear a word I said, but I shouted at her that I deserved something better than drowning like a rat in

the Gulf of Mexico. 'You're a Perkins,' I says to her, 'and a Perkins keeps his word. A Perkins is a good friend. You stay afloat until morning. Going back on me like this!' The crew thought I was crazy, but the old *Charles Perkins* heard and she understood. She floated all night, sunk up to her neck in the seas and wallowing like a cow in a ditch. Floated, with a hole in her as big as a church door. What d'you think of that?"

"I think she was a good sort."

"She was. At dawn, just as the wind calmed down a little and a big tramp eased up over the horizon, she took one long look at me, sighed deep down in herself and sank like a stone."

The captain got up, went to the rail, gazed down into the black water a moment and then came hurriedly back. "Like a stone," he repeated. "What do you think of that?"

And before I could answer he rushed along the deck, hiding his tears behind a huge red handkerchief.

There were many such stories. The guardsmen on the forward deck had tales of the throbbing nights along the border and of blazing days between the parched desert and the withering sky. The English first officer and the smiling, red-cheeked German mate, and the hatchet-

faced watchman all had stories. The captain was a treasure house of yarns, and the *Charles Perkins* shabby crew could have supplied Conrad with themes to last another magnificent lifetime. There was a scarlet-headed Irishman with a Jewish nose and a mouth full of dazzling gold teeth who developed, upon acquaintance, a whimsical fancy and a vast knowledge of men. He sold furs in the far South and had naturally acquired a broad and unending optimism. There was a musical New Englander who played "Still Wie Die Nacht" from morning to night and brought floods of tears from the lachrymose pastry cook. There was a little old man in the black alpaca jacket who "took his vacation" on the *Concho* every year and improved the shining hours by gilding the railings and pillars and carved ornamentations of the dining saloon. A perfect frenzy of gilding seized him as we approached New York. A daredevil negro was sent aloft to unscrew the big gold balls that tipped the ship's masts and to lower them to the deck for the little old man's ministrations. Every one stood on the forward deck and craned their necks and stared into the face of the blazing sky at the climbing negro who curled his legs around the mast and lifted himself inch by inch toward his goal. And the captain, with his

cigar turned upward at the extreme angle of an anti-aircraft gun, warned me to stand well out of the way. "If he should fall, you know——"

Oh, there was no end of excitement. The firemen became incendiary (small wonder!) and fought like demons in the boiler room; the Mexicans caught the fever and attacked, not their enemies the guardsmen, but one another. A miniature German-Mexican war raged below decks, and while I cowered in delicious fright in my steamer chair, expecting almost anything, a fire-eating Kain-tuckian who had the next chair produced a six-shooter, juggled it carelessly and told me to "never you mind. I could pick off the whole crew of 'em, m'am. Just you sit quiet."

I sat quiet, hoping that the howling Mexicans would disrupt onto the main deck and that I would see the little Kain-tuckian in action. He rested the six-shooter on the arm of his chair and talked about the price of eggs. That, I suppose, was calculated to quiet me, but afterwards, when the Mexicans had been restored to peace and had kissed each other tenderly, the disappointed Kain-tuckian told me wonderful stories of his bloodthirsty youth. He had taken part in countless battles with moonshiners and outlaws —he had been wounded, he had killed, he had

had hairbreadth escapes from unspeakable dangers. He was the living embodiment of a Richard Harding Davis hero—Captain Macklin at fifty. And how he could talk! Life—romantic, delectable, impossible life—rolled off the tip of his tongue like honey. He was the legendary adventurer with the gift of gab, and from morning to night the glorious impossibilities were spun for my delectation. I could not keep the discovery to myself; it was all super "copy," but since Allan does not write stories I allowed him to share the Kain-tuckian's yarns with me.

"Dare I write them?" I asked Allan one morning at breakfast.

"Write what?"

"Those 'moonshine' tales—I could make a fortune."

"Some one else has already made that particular fortune," Allan decided, and my heart dropped into my boots.

"D'you mean that they are *old* stories?" I gasped.

"Old as the Aztec ruins," Allan answered, and winked at Captain McIntosh.

Oh, it was not stupid, this coming from Southern seas into the grey waters of the North! We followed the Gulf Stream for two nights

and two days, rushing smoothly forward across the patterned water. The sky was a beautiful pageant, a procession of immaculate clouds that rolled from horizon to horizon, wrapped in white robes, trailing their feet in the sea and thrusting their heads into a glory of light. Clouds of flying fish sprayed before us, dolphins and white-breasted gulls followed astern and the sea was deeply blue, black-blue save where the crested waves turned over at their tips and broke in a spreading fan of milky foam. The South had not dropped behind—we were linked to it by the endless wake left by the hurrying *Concho* across the brilliant sea. Sometimes we saw the sandy shores of Florida and long, white beaches fringed with tufted palms. Sometimes the land receded and the limitless sea surrounded us. Always the air was mild and infinitely fragrant. Ships rose above the horizon trailing long banners of oily smoke, crossed our bow and passed, going down to the Islands or to South America. Tide rifts, like periscopes awash, followed us as long as we stayed in the hot Gulf Stream. Night swarmed with blue stars and a late moon climbed into the sky and flooded the world with phosphorescent whiteness.

Then miraculously the world grew grey and

we passed out of the brilliant South into the colourless North. Gusts of wind shook the *Concho,* the seas piled up, slate-grey, furious, and slapped the bow resoundingly, throwing clouds of icy spray across the decks. The Mexicans went below to chatter and to repent at their leisure. The drenched ship wallowed deeper and deeper, the scudding clouds shut out the world. And Allan and I, wrapped to our blue noses in great coats and mufflers, stared through the black squalls toward New York and sighed—for we were going home again to snow, ice, bitter winds, routine, work—and we had just learned how to play! We had just learned to love the dreamy and romantic South. The *Concho,* reeling through the mountainous seas, was taking us to reality. One by one the octopus arms of the great city reached out to draw us back again. Lightships, heaving drunkenly, and a great tide of steamers rushing west and south across our path—New York! We sensed it before the flickering lights of Asbury Park warned us that the voyage was nearly over. We waited until the *Concho* has passed Sandy Hook and had anchored for the night under the outstretched arm of flamboyant Mother Liberty. We could hear the city, grumbling and groaning faintly. We could see the myriad

lights in its towers and pinnacles. We were apart from it, still mysteriously caught into our brief dream. A light powder of snow fell gently on the *Concho's* decks and rimmed the spars and rails and touched our cheeks with caressing fingers. It veiled the crowded harbour and vested Madame Liberty in white. Ferry boats passed bearing black crowds——

"Home," we said.

Need I tell you that we sighed? And we part from you, dear Reader, patient, consoling, forgiving Reader, with a sigh. For we were leaving you who have gone with us on our long pilgrimage and we were leaving the splendid, the magnificent South. Think of us leaning on the *Concho's* rail, shrouded in the gentle snow, with our eyes on New York and a sigh for the South in our full hearts.

THE END

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
LA JOLLA, CALIFORNIA
WITHDRAWN
FROM UCSD